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The Clinch County News

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Wednesday, January 14, 2026

HOMERVILLE, GEORGIA

10 PAGES, ONE SECTION

Bargains, Coupons & Deals
INSIDE with these sales papers:

Dunham's
SPORTS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

What's going on in your community

MLK Parade set for January 19th

The annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration parade will be held on Monday, January 19, starting at 2 p.m. The parade will start at the 66 Fuel Center gas station and end at Sessoms Field. An MLK service will be held after the parade at 3 p.m. at Gospel Tabernacle COGIC located at 59 Virginia Avenue in Homerville. Anyone who wants to participate, please call Tracy Thomas 912-520-9566.

Local students make SGSC honors lists

South Georgia State College recently announced its Fall 2025 Academic Recognition Lists. Students from Clinch County recognized included: President's List: Olivia Aycok, Kalita Edwards, Cara E. Johnson, Clara G. Steedley. Dean's List: Bankes Ganas, Donnie R. Purvis. Academic Honors List: Olivia H. Brogdon, Amelia B. Cox, Brian King, Eliza A. Nipper, Nadalynn T. Young.

Property tax bills will be delayed for 2025

Property tax bills for 2025 are delayed this year due to the property reevaluation process. They will possibly be sent out toward the end of January. Once they are sent, the due date will be no less than 60 days later, according to the tax commission office.

FMB sponsoring trips to NY, Amish Country

Farmers and Merchants Bank is sponsoring trips to Niagara Falls USA & Buffalo, June 6-14, 2026 and to Shippshewana, Indiana, Amish Country, October 11-16, 2026. Come join the fun and travel with the Farmers and Merchants Bank group to Niagara Falls USA & Buffalo for 9 days and 8 nights, 14 meals and tours of Niagara Falls, USA (No Passport), Cruise on the "Maid of the Mist" and Erie Canal, drive through wine country & tour Buffalo. Amish Country trip is for 6 days and 5 nights, 8 meals and tour Amish Homestead, see the show "Love Comes Softly", visit MENNO-HOF, the Amish & Mennonite Story, a wagon tour and visit DAS Dutchman & Downtown Shippshewana. If you are interested, contact Jo Ann Tomlinson at tomlinson.joann@gmail.com or 912-487-8664.

Tuesday Night Talks at Clinch Memorial

The Clinch County Public Library Board will meet on Thursday, January 8, 2026 at the Clinch County Public Library. The meeting time is 4 p.m. For further information, please call 912-287-4982.

LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

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Morgan named to replace retiring Dickerson as head football coach

By Len Robbins
Publisher

It didn't take long for Clinch County High to decide on a replacement for retiring head football coach Jim Dickerson.

Three days after Dickerson announced he was going back into retirement at a called school board meeting, the school system announced Rance Morgan as his replacement as head football coach.

Morgan is currently the school's assistant principal and is a former assistant football coach at CCHS and Lanier County.

"I'm excited to announce that Rance Morgan has officially been named our head football coach," CCHS Principal JerriLynn Spivey said in an announcement Thursday morning. "After spending some time away from football, he's eager to get back on the sidelines and inspire our players with his passion for the game, all while upholding our proud winning tradition. He brings a wealth of experience and a strong connection with our athletes, fans, and community. Knowing our traditions so well, I have no doubt he'll lead us to great things this upcoming season."

A graduate of CCHS, Morgan was a three-sport athlete for the Panthers, earning All-State honors in football and baseball.

He was a standout short-stop and pitcher for the Panther baseball team and a key member of the 2003 state championship team. He went on to receive a baseball scholarship from the University of Georgia, then transferred to Valdosta State, where he played for the Blazers. In football, Morgan was a two-way starter for the 2002 state champion Panther football team, earning All-State twice as a defensive back. He shares the school record for most interceptions in a career (16).

Morgan was an assistant football coach under Dickerson until going to Lanier County for a year (2015) as defensive coordinator. He returned to Clinch County, and was offensive coordinator for the Panthers under Don Tison for a season before going into administration.

"I missed coaching, and in particular, the player relationships, and then this opportunity came up," said Morgan. "I was fortunate to play for Coach (Cecil) Barber and Coach Dickinson, and then coach with Jim. I know the history of this program and what an honor it is to lead it. I realize I'm walking in the footsteps of giants, and appreciate all the support I've received."

Dickerson had served as the CCHS head coach for 15 years before retiring in 2019. He came out of re-



Rance Morgan (above) will replace Jim Dickerson (below), who announced his retirement Monday, as the next CCHS head football coach.



irement in 2024 to lead the Panthers again, finishing 11-2 in 2024 and 13-1 in 2025. His overall record in 17 combined seasons as the Head Panther is 176-47-1 (a .788 winning percentage), which is the most wins of any coach in Panther football history, and also the highest winning percentage.

At the called school board meeting Monday, Superintendent Dr. Lori James praised Dickerson for coming out of retirement to lead the Panthers after the resignation of Don Tison in the spring of 2024.

"You stepped in when we really needed you," James (Continued on Page 3)

City OKs tax hike after final hearing

By Ben Murray
Staff Writer

The Homerville City Council held the last of their public hearings concerning raising taxes on Monday, January 5, followed by their regular monthly meeting.

At the meeting, the council approved a millage rate of 11.5 mills, effectively constituting a tax increase due to property tax reevaluation in the city.

During the hearing, a citizen expressed concerns about the city needing more funding, and an additional \$5 that was added to the city water bills in 2025.

Mayor Tom Kennedy responded by saying that "being behind on the audits put the city so far behind," and that because of that and the county-wide property reevaluations, "we didn't know how much we were going to have to raise the millage rate."

Mayor Kennedy offered to stay after the meeting and answer any questions anybody had regarding the city's budget or where money was being used, saying, "I'm more than happy to share any information about our budget with anyone interested."

In other action from the meeting, held after the hearing, the city council:

- Tabled a discussion about a proposed new motorized cart, ATV, and ORV ordinance from Police Chief Keith Jackson. The ordinance will have new rules about tagging these vehicles and making them

street legal through inspections.

- Was informed about the Martin Luther King Jr. parade set for Monday, January 19, from 2 PM to 3 PM.

- Approved reappointing Willie Hard-ee as Mayor Pro-Tem, Samantha Rittenhouse as City Manager, Keith Jackson as Police Chief, Charles Steedley as Municipal Court Judge, Denny Barnard as City Clerk, Chad Corlee as City Attorney, Danny Strickland as Fire Chief, and Chuck Ballance as Building Inspector.

- Heard from Carol Glaze about looking into getting insurance for Pea Ridge Park, as well as if the city wants to hire someone to clean up at the park after events are held. Mayor Kennedy stated that the Pea Ridge Park committee would have to meet and make that decision, based on what money they had available from collecting money from events held at the park, and bring it to the city for approval.

- Heard from council member Amanda Webb, who asked about a sign for the cemetery on the Slash Pine side, and when the city could add more streets to those to be repaired.

Rittenhouse said that they could not put a sign where they had originally wanted to, due to a huge possibility of the sign being knocked down by motorists, and also stated that they could not add any more streets to their list until GDOT sends someone to inspect the streets that have already been repaired.

School board approves rolling back millage rate at called meeting

By Ben Murray
Staff Writer

The Clinch County Board of Education approved setting the millage rate at 14.699 mills for the fiscal

year at a called meeting, held Monday, January 5.

This is a decrease in the millage rate for the school system from 17.836 from tax year 2024, due to increased property values after

property reevaluations done this year.

The school board rolled back the millage to roughly collect the same amount in property tax revenue as the previous fiscal year.

Commission hears about hospital's financial challenges

By Len Robbins
Publisher

The Clinch County Board of Commissioners heard a presentation about the current financial challenges facing Clinch Memorial Hospital Monday.

At their first meeting of the new year, commissioners heard an audit report from CMH CEO Angela Handley. Handley said the hospital had a deficit of \$5 million in the last fiscal year on patient costs compared to revenues, but were able to shore up that deficit with other revenues. Handley said that grant funding "has dried up," and that the recently-passed "One Big Beautiful Bill" will decrease reimbursements to the hospital, which may force the hospital to cut costs, jobs, and/or services in the near future.

"If the hospital has to cut jobs, it will affect other businesses in Clinch County," said Handley. "We can't do this alone. We need community support and support on the governmental level. Rural hospitals are in danger of closing every day, and we don't really know what's coming in the future."

Handley thanked commissioners for providing local tax revenue for the hospital, saying "our accountants have told us that our hospital would definitely close without county tax support."

In other action from the meeting, commissioners:

- Approved the meeting's agenda and minutes from the previous meeting.

- Approved the re-appointments of Henry Moylan as commission chair; Chad Brown as vice-chair; Pam Welch as county clerk; Chad Corlee as county attorney; Brook Allen to the Board of Elections; David Hinson to the Board of Elections; and Lavada Pitts to the DFCS board.

- Approved the holiday calendar for 2026.

- Approved the service agreement with Middle Flint Area Council on Aging.

The agreement is for providing "Meals on Wheels" meals to local seniors. The cost has increased from \$1.60 per meal to \$4.60 per meal under the new agreement.

- Approved qualifying fees for 2026.

- Approved tax levy resolution.

Moylan said tax payment deadline will probably be in late March or early April due to the revaluation delay.

- Approved the contract for medical services with Clinch Memorial Hospital.

- Discussed addressing the (Continued on Page 3)