

Newton County Government

1124 Clark St SW.
Covington, GA 30014

Strategic Plan

2019 to 2022



"OneNewton!"

**NEWTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
2019 to 2022**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the entire Newton County community,

The Newton County Government would like to acknowledge your support and contribution to this document.

Without your feedback and input, we would not have been able to create this Strategic Plan. You have provided us with the inspiration that, as a community, we can be “OneNewton!”

Marcello Banes

Chairman

Board of Commissioners

The Newton County Government

NEWTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2022

Strategic Plan Core Planning Team Members, Department Head Operational Team, and Facilitators

In response to the themes identified in the Stakeholders' Needs Assessment, a planning team of community leaders, members of the Newton County Board of Commissioners and the Department Heads of Newton County government immersed themselves in the creation of this Newton County Government Strategic Plan which addresses many of the needs expressed by the Stakeholders in the Needs Assessment. This Core Planning Team, from April 2018 - January 2019 spent hundreds of long, arduous hours researching, reviewing, writing, delving into thoughtful discussion and healthy debate and regularly engaging with the community. Without the team's perseverance and commitment to a positive future for Newton County this solid, foundational, stakeholder-focused Government Strategic Plan could not have been produced.

The members of the 2019 - 2022 "Core" Planning Team include:

Newton County Government Elected Officials

Bailey, Trey – School Board Member, Post 1, Newton County Board of Education;
Executive Pastor, Eastridge Community Church
Banes, Marcello – Chairman, Newton County Board of Commissioners
Brown, Ezell – Sheriff, Newton County
Cowan, Ronnie – Commissioner D5, Newton County Board of Commissioners
Roseberry, Jerry – Mayor, City of Oxford, GA
Schulz, Nancy – Commissioner D3, Newton County Board of Commissioners

Newton County Government Appointed Leaders

Fuhrey, Samantha – Superintendent, Newton County School System
Hopkins, Mike – Executive Director, Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority
Kerr, Lloyd – County Manager, Newton County

Community Representatives

Bertram, Laura – Executive Director, Newton County Community Partnership
Campbell, Kent – Board Member, Newton County Solid Waste Authority
Staffins, Ralph – President, Covington Newton Chamber of Commerce
Williams, Winston – Volunteer, Garden of Gethsemane Homeless Shelter

Newton County Government Department Heads

Brown, James – Director, Water Resources
Clegg, Chester – Transportation Engineer
Conner, Michael – Chief, Fire Services
Cross, Nicole – Director, Finance
Fazio, Bryan – Public Information Officer
Johnson, Judy – Director, Development Services
Reed, Freda – Director, Senior Center
Shoemaker, Amanda – Director, Human Resources/Risk Management

With the guidance and support of the Newton County Board of Commissioners:

Banes, Marcello – Chairman
Edwards, Stan – Commissioner, D1
Mason, Demond – Commissioner, D2
Sims, Lanier – (former Commissioner, D2)
Schulz, Nancy – Commissioner, D3
Henderson, J.C. – Commissioner, D4
Cowan, Ronnie – Commissioner, D5

In collaboration with the following Newton County Constitutional Officers/Elected Officials:

Bell, Melanie - Judge Probate Court / Magistrate Court
Brown, Ezell - Sheriff
Dingler, Barbara - Tax Commissioner
Hays, Linda - Clerk of Superior Court
Zon, Layla - District Attorney

In addition to the Department Heads Serving on the Planning Team, the following members of the Department Head group contributed additional operational support to the Newton County Strategic Plan:

Johnson, Jason – Director, Building Services
Lawrence, Tim – Manager, GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
Malcolm, Chris – Director, Public Works
Mann, Greg – Director, Information Systems
Mantle, Angela – Director, Board of Elections & Registration
Mask, Dwayne – Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation
Nolan, Jody – Director, Emergency Management Agency
Palmer, Buster – Manager, Fleet Maintenance
Riley, Laurie – Executive Director, Keep Covington/Newton Beautiful
Turner, Ternard – Director, Parks & Recreation
Walter, Kevin – Manager, Solid Waste
Weimann, Cynthia - Director, Animal Control

The consulting firm facilitating the focus groups and the Strategic Planning Process:

Organizations By Design, LLC
Foster, Alysin
Foster, Frank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Newton County's government first Strategic Plan. To create it the County conducted broad outreach to capture stakeholder needs information. The result is not only a Plan document but an empowered community.

A Systems Thinking Approach was the framework selected to develop the Newton County Government Strategic Plan. This approach took into consideration the multiple systems in the County's operating environment and the many stakeholders within those systems that have an impact on the County government or are, either directly or indirectly, impacted by it. Each of the County's stakeholders have different sets of needs. The challenge for the County is to continually identify and understand those varying stakeholders needs – where they may be similar or differ, and then clarify its organizational direction, vision, and focus to try to address those needs.

The process was initiated with a Stakeholder Needs Assessment. Stakeholder perceptions were collected through 55 individual and focus group interviews for a total of 292 stakeholders whose input was transcribed into more than 450 pages of data. The stakeholder focus group categories were as follows:

- Community residents in Districts 1 - 5
- Internal stakeholders – Employees, Constitutional Officers and Judges
- Elected or Appointed Authorities, Commissions and Boards
- External stakeholders, including businesses, educational, environmental and service organizations

Six recurring themes emerged from the data collected from stakeholders:

- The enjoyment of small town life
- Desire to be able to trust County leadership
- Communication & collaboration
- Quality of life
- Equity & representation
- Desire for planned growth

Although many needs were surfaced in the Stakeholders Needs Assessment, the Board of Commissioners focused on those needs that fell within the purview of what a County government has direct service delivery responsibility for, and for which they could hold themselves accountable.

With that direction, the planning team of community leaders, members of the Newton County Board of Commissioners, and the Department Heads of Newton County Government are confident that this Strategic Plan addresses many of the needs expressed by the stakeholders in the Needs Assessment.

Newton County Stakeholder Needs Assessment and Findings SUMMARY

A Stakeholder Needs Assessment was commissioned by the Newton County Board of Commissioners (BOC). Organizations By Design, LLC. (OBD) was contracted to facilitate Stakeholder Needs Assessment focus groups on behalf of Newton County in November and December 2017 and January 2018 of persons who live, work, and operate businesses in Newton County, Georgia. The purpose of the needs assessment was to assist the Newton County Board of Commissioners in collecting renewed input from the local community to better understand the most pressing, current issues as well as the perceived future needs of its stakeholders. A needs assessment is a common process used by organizations to determine priorities, make organizational improvements, and allocate resources to best address those identified needs. The end goal is to improve and sustain the appeal of Newton County, Georgia as a desirable live, work, and business community.

The needs assessment documented stakeholders' perceptions of the following: living and working in the County, desired changes in the County, greatest personal or professional needs that could be addressed by the County, and suggestions for changes to be implemented within the next 3 years in order to promote positive growth in the County.

Stakeholder perceptions were collected through 55 individual and focus group interviews for a total of 292 stakeholders whose input was transcribed into more than 450 pages of data. The stakeholder focus groups were as follows:

1. Community residents in Districts 1 – 5
2. Individuals who were internal to Newton County Government
 - a. Department Heads
 - i. Department Heads
 - ii. District Attorney
 - iii. Keep Covington/Newton Beautiful
 - b. Constitutional Officers
 - i. Tax Commissioner
 - ii. Clerk of Courts
 - iii. Sheriff

- c. Judges
 - i. Juvenile
 - ii. Magistrate/Probate
 - iii. Superior
- 3. Elected or Appointed Authorities and Commissions
 - a. Airport Authority
 - b. Board of Education
 - c. Health Department (GRN)
 - d. Housing Authority
 - e. Industrial Development Authority
 - f. Joint Development Authority
 - g. Library Board
 - h. Solid Waste Authority
 - i. Water and Sewerage Authority
- 4. External Stakeholders
 - a. Businesses – small, medium and large
 - b. Civic Organizations
 - c. Educational Institutions
 - d. Environmental Groups
 - e. Faith-Based Representatives
 - f. Healthcare Providers
 - g. Millennials (ages 25 – 35)
 - h. Municipal Mayors
 - i. Seniors
 - j. Service Organizations
 - k. Young Adults (ages 18 - 24)

The stakeholders identified many needs in the Stakeholder Focus Groups. The following **MAJOR THEMES** surfaced repeatedly across all focus groups of the Stakeholder Needs Assessment:

Theme 1:

Small Town/Rural Community with City Accessibility

Theme 2:

Leaders Must Secure Stakeholder Trust

Theme 3:

Improve Communication and Collaboration

Theme 4:

Improve and Sustain Quality of Life

Theme 5:

Improve Equity and Representation in County

Theme 6:

Develop and Implement a Strategic Plan for Growth

Newton County Government Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Vision:

*What Newton County Government aspires to be in the future, and in broad terms,
What will be our legacy?*

**Newton County is a thriving community united through
strong relationships and partnerships.**

Mission:

*A high-level statement that outlines how the Newton County Government will be working
toward its Vision throughout the next 3 years:*

Newton County is a safe, well-planned community that respects and values an informed citizenry, embraces diversity, preserves natural resources, and cultivates economic and social opportunities.

Key Stakeholders:

Those on whom we will focus in our County during this 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan:

- Citizens (all ages)
- Businesses – Industries, Medium and Small
- Governing Authorities – Municipalities, Newton County Government Employees, Constitutional Officers, Authorities, and Boards

Core Values:

*What We Believe In as a County / What We Stand For / What We Will Hold
Ourselves Accountable To / How We Treat One Another:*

- **Collaboration** – We work together to achieve our common goals.
- **Dependable** – We honor our commitments.
- **Energetic** – We encourage passion and creativity that inspires our community to thrive.
- **Equitable** – We advocate fairness and impartiality in all things we do for the good of all.
- **Integrity** – We stand by truth and transparency.
- **Unity** – We are an exceptional and inseparable community.

Rallying Cry:

*A powerful, motivating belief which inspires people to unite and act
in support of a particular idea.*

OneNewton!

Newton County Government Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022

Strategies and Strategic Action Items

Based upon painstakingly careful review of the needs assessment stakeholder input, the five (5) Strategies below have been identified as the critical areas of focus for 2019-2022 moving Newton County towards becoming the county we aspire to be in our Vision. The Strategy Definition explains the meaning of the Strategy as we view it, and the Strategic Action Items provide the high-level action steps stating how the Strategies will be executed. The “how-to’s” of these high-level action steps will be further outlined as the County Departments develop their operational plans in alignment with the overall County Strategic Plan.

Strategy A:

Cultivate a culture of trust

Strategy Definition:

Promote transparency, demonstrate integrity, and encourage communication in the community.

Strategic Action Items

1. **Commit to a transparent government.**
 - a. ***Engage in open forum meetings with elected officials and the general public.***
 - b. ***Update Elected Officials, Staff and the Public annually on Ethics Ordinances, Open Meetings/Open Records.***
2. **Cultivate a culture of two-way free-flowing information between Newton County, Municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Education and state agencies.**
3. **Develop annual work plans that reflect budgeted priorities of the BOC, Constitutional Officers, elected officials and Department Heads.**
4. **Ensure county staff has adequate training, equipment, and BOC support to provide for the needs of the stakeholders.**
5. **Promote accomplishments achieved within the community.**
6. **Establish a Newton County Government 101 (Citizens’ Academy).**
7. **Promote opportunities for Newton County government internships.**
8. **Promote volunteerism and civic engagement.**
9. **Continually promote the long-term vision for the County with stakeholders.**

Strategy B:

Enhance Quality of Life

Strategy Definition:

Support initiatives that provide a sense of belonging, security and well-being.

Strategic Action Items:

- 1. Create a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing unsafe environments in existing parts of the community.**
- 2. Complete a transit study to determine the feasibility of public transportation in Newton County.**
- 3. Collaborate on a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**
- 4. Support activities and programs for seniors.**
- 5. Provide more amenities for youth.**
- 6. Support the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Authority's (SWMA) Strategic Plan.**
- 7. Support clean water initiatives in Newton County.**
- 8. Review and establish consistent signage throughout the County.**
- 9. Encourage stakeholder initiatives towards the implementation of the Trail Network Plan.**
- 10. Support the Community Health Assessment/Community Health Improvement Plan (which includes Mental Health).**
- 11. Support education initiatives in Newton County.**
- 12. Highlight Newton County activities throughout the County.**

Strategy C:

Create a framework for strategic economic development

Strategy Definition:

Create opportunities for economic development throughout Newton County for existing and future business.

Strategic Action Items:

- 1. Update and realign ordinances, regulations, policies, and enforcement of codes to ensure best quality of growth.**
- 2. Formulate incentives for new development and redevelopment for desired growth.**
- 3. Establish and utilize partnerships to enhance economic development.**
- 4. Assess all County transportation routes to enhance economic development.**
- 5. Advocate for post-secondary education institutions and job readiness programs.**

Strategy D:

Strengthen and expand facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of the public

Strategy Definition:

Ensure the physical components of the County's infrastructure systems (which include buildings, transportation, solid waste, storm sewer and the water supply) continue to sustain the services essential to living and doing business in Newton County.

Strategic Action Items:

- 1. Develop short, intermediate, and long-term implementation plans for infrastructure projects.**
- 2. Implement the short-term components of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.**
- 3. Develop short term, intermediate, and long term implementation plans for County facilities.**
- 4. Collaborate with members of the consecutive water system to review long range water supply and distribution.**
- 5. Develop a plan for new sidewalk construction and sidewalk maintenance.**
- 6. Ensure adequate funding when planning SPLOST projects.**
- 7. Develop a timeline for completion of bonded SPLOST projects.**
- 8. Commit to pave or resurface a minimum of 20 miles of county roads annually.**

Strategy E:

Provide for a safe and secure community

Strategy Definition:

Help ensure the protection of citizens, visitors, property, organizations, and institutions against threats to their well-being, their quality of life, and their perception of safety.

Strategic Action Items:

1. **Collaborate with other departments and civic groups to promote responsible pet ownership including vaccinations, microchipping and sterilization.**
2. **Participate in schools' career days and offer education in dog bite prevention, rabies and responsible pet ownership.**
3. **Provide Emergency Planning information to citizen that include companion animals, equine and livestock.**
4. **Continue inspections of life safety systems such as Fire, Security, Elevators, and Generators. Continue work with the Sheriff's Department on facility disaster plans that would include tornado drills, bomb threats, active shooter, fire evacuations, etc.**
5. **Plan, prepare, and train for response and recovery to mitigate different types of disasters.**
6. **Obtain needed emergency management equipment through grant funding for Newton County municipalities.**
7. **Develop and maintain an operational risk management process which identifies and mitigates exposures to loss, attains adequate insurance coverages, and meets safety goals and objectives Assist public safety with the implementation of new technologies to provide for more comprehensive citizen protection.**
8. **Staff all fire apparatus to standards set forth in NFPA to aid in handling incidents and responses.**
9. **Build the North Newton fire station planned to aid in responses.**
10. **Expand firefighter Advanced Life Support (ALS) capability.**
11. **Strengthen the bridge between law enforcement and the community:**
 - a. **Educate the community on safe methods and habits to effectively protect their persons and property; to include crimes against the elderly and "crimes of opportunity"**
 - b. **Enlarge the Newton County Neighborhood Watch program**

c. Continue to have deputies visible in the neighborhoods to respect, honor and protect the rights and dignity of the entire community

- 12. Ensure the Sheriff's Office is up-to-date with modern technology to provide protection in a more comprehensive manner.**
- 13. Obtain specialized training for deputies and personnel.**
- 14. Hire & retain quality law enforcement personnel.**
- 15. Continue improvement to Jail Detention/Inmate programs.**
- 16. Provide law enforcement for the municipalities and protection in the schools.**
- 17. Educate students on safe environments and combatting gang-related activities.**
- 18. Ensure safety of government buildings.**
- 19. Support local Parks and Recreation Department initiatives geared toward mentoring youth.**
- 20. Educate juveniles on the judicial process to prevent and reduce criminal activity in partnership with the Sheriff's Department, Court Services and the Coroner's Office.**
- 21. Develop and implement a detailed plan for severe weather response with improved mapping and tracking.**
- 22. Train Public Works First Responders for emergency incidents.**
- 23. Provide fleet maintenance with staff and equipment capable of servicing Sheriff's department and fire department.**
- 24. Provide community awareness outreach on personal and property precautions, safety and protection as well as emergency preparedness.**

**NEWTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT
2019 – 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN**

STRATEGIC PLAN MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Success Measures convert the desired outcomes of your ideal future to quantifiable realities. Key Success Measures tell you whether the Plan is on track with achieving the desired outcomes. Ideally. They measure results, not activities and efforts.

Newton County keeps track of a significant amount of data. For the purpose of this planning effort, the focus was on data that was more strategic and linked to measuring the successful achievement of the Vision and Mission.

The Key Success measures identified will allow the County's Leadership team to determine if the execution of each strategy in the Plan is ...

- ❖ Effective (achieving its stated goals),
- ❖ Efficient (making the appropriate resource decisions), and
- ❖ Having the intended impact

Key Success Measures for the Newton County Government Strategic Plan

External Stakeholders Success Measures:

- Citizen Success – measured through Satisfaction Survey Average Scores
- Business – measured through Satisfaction Survey Average Scores
- Municipalities – measured through Satisfaction Survey Average Scores

Employee Success Measures:

- Employee Job Satisfaction Survey – measured through Survey Average Scores
- The rate of Voluntary Turnover

Internal Process Improvements Success Measures:

- Newton County's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating

Financial / Resourcing Success Measures:

- Amount Net Revenue
- Amount Operating Expense
- Amount of Debt

Appendix

Key Success Measures Glossary

The “Key Success Measure Glossary” describes how the Key Success Measures are being defined; what the targets or trends will be, if known; how the data is being calculated to determine the measure; and the source from which that data will be drawn.

| Key Success Measure Areas | Specific Measurement Process | Targets | How Calculated | Source of Data |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stakeholder Satisfaction Success | | | | |
| Citizen | Satisfaction Surveys | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Average yearly survey scores per year | TBD |
| Business | Satisfaction Surveys | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Average yearly survey scores per year | TBD |
| Municipalities | Satisfaction Surveys | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Average yearly survey scores per year | TBD |
| | | | | |
| Employee Success | | | | |
| Satisfaction | Satisfaction Survey | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Average yearly survey scores per year | Newton County Human Resource Dept. |
| Voluntary Turnovers | | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Being developed | Newton County Human Resource Dept. |

| Key Success Measure Areas | Specific Measurement Process | Targets | How Calculated | Source of Data |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Financial Success | | | | |
| Income | Net Revenue | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Total Revenue, minus costs and operating expenses | Newton County Financial/Budget records |
| Expenditures | Operating Expenses | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | An expense incurred in carrying out an organization's day to day activities. | Newton County Financial/Budget records |
| Obligations | Debt | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Outstanding financial obligations | Newton County Financial/Budget records |
| Process Improvement Success | | | | |
| ISO | ISO Rate | 2019 – Est Baseline 2020 -? 2021 -? | Public Protection Classification (PPC) | Insurance Services Office Report |
| | | | | |

Definition of Terms

The Newton County Strategic Plan

The Newton County Strategic Plan utilized a systems-thinking framework to guide its work and set its future Strategic Direction. The Strategic Direction will serve as the “roadmap” for Newton County Government for the next 3 years as it delivers services to its stakeholders as outlined in the following order:

Vision

What the County aspires to be; what it wants its future to look like; where it wants to be in the future. The Vision describes future hopes and may never be fully attainable. It becomes the “North Star” for the County to follow. It embodies the legacy it wants to create.

Mission

Identifies who the stakeholders of the County are, the County’s response to the Stakeholders’ Needs Assessment needs, and what results the stakeholders can expect from the County Government based upon those expressed needs.

Stakeholders

Those individuals or entities on whom Newton County will focus its time, energy and resources during the three (3)-year timeframe of the Strategic Plan. Once these needs are addressed as outlined in the Strategic Plan, then another set of individuals or entities may become the focus in future Strategic Plans.

Core Values

Core Values are the fundamental beliefs of the County that will guides its behaviors and its decisions. They are the principles it stands on in its service delivery. These are behaviors the County wants to hold itself accountable to in its dealings and how external stakeholders can expect to be treated. Internally, the Core Values also describe the organizational culture the County Government wants to create and guide how management and coworkers will treat each other in their daily interactions with one another.

Strategies

The critical areas of focus that have been identified based upon the Stakeholder Needs Assessment for the Plan period (2019-2022) that will move the County towards becoming what it states it aspires to be in its Vision statement.

Strategy Definition

The Strategy Definition explains the meaning of the Strategy from a Newton County perspective.

Strategic Action Items

Strategic Action Items provide the high-level action steps stating how the Strategies will be executed.

The following are definitions for terms used within the Newton County Strategic Plan:

Advanced Life Support (ALS)

A set of life-saving protocols and skills that expand on Basic Life Support (BLS) to further support the circulation and provide advanced airway skills for adequate ventilation (breathing).

Authorities

An alternative method to service delivery for local governments to address increased public demand for specialized services. Authorities are often better suited to deliver these services since they focus on one specific function, allowing a greater degree of concentrated effort in providing services. Each is governed by Appointed Boards. Individuals are appointed by the Newton County Board of Commissioners to Authorities and, in some cases, the municipalities within the County. The following are authorities appointed by the BOC and referenced in the Plan.

- Industrial Development Authority (IDA)
- Joint Development Authority (JDA)
- Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority (NCWSA)
- Newton Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA)

Board of Commissioners (BOC)

The legislative, policy-making body of Newton County. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for establishing county policies, ordinances, setting and amending the county budget and levying taxes. The board adopts the county budget and authorizes expenditures. The Board of Commissioners also approves or denies zoning throughout the county. Six members constitute the Newton County Board of Commissioners. The county is divided into five commission districts. The district commissioners are elected by district and the chairman is elected countywide. They serve staggered four-year terms.

Community Health Assessment & Community Health Improvement Plan

A report compiled by the Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments that examines the County's health status and helps focus efforts on the most important health needs of counties' residents. In addition to disease indicators, the report includes a focus on other things that impact health, e.g. income, housing, education and transportation. The intent of the assessment and plan is to help shape and coordinate community plans and efforts to improve health.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The plan adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2018 that lists needed improvements to the Newton County transportation system including roads, bridges, public transit and trails. Project lists are used for short-term, intermediate and long term planning. Projects must be listed in the plan to be eligible for federal funding.

Consecutive Water System

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Newton County, the Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority (NCWSA), the cities of Covington, Mansfield, Newborn, Oxford, Porterdale collectively. The cities have entered a Water Supply Agreement.

Constitutional Officers

Elected officials whose office is created by the state constitution rather than by law. The Constitution also defines the term of office for these offices. County constitutional officers are the Judge of Probate/Magistrate Court, Clerk of Superior Court, Sheriff and Tax Commissioner.

Elected Officials

Those persons voted into office by Newton County citizenry under the certification of the Newton County Board of Elections. Newton County Government employ the following elected positions:

- Superior Court Judges
- District Attorney
- Judge Probate Court / Magistrate Court
- Clerk of Superior Court
- Sheriff
- Tax Commissioner
- County Coroner
- Chairman, Board of Commissioners
- District 1 Commissioner
- District 2 Commissioner
- District 3 Commissioner
- District 4 Commissioner
- District 5 Commissioner

Judges– Appointed or elected officials who decide cases in Newton County’s courts of law. Newton County has Judges who preside over the county’s Superior, Magistrate, Probate and Juvenile Courts.

Court System - Newton County resides under the Alcovy Circuit Courts. The Alcovy Judicial Circuit is part of the state’s Tenth Judicial District and serves Newton and Walton Counties.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)

An agency of Georgia that directs programs that work to conserve and improve Georgia’s energy, land and water resources. GEFA provides loans for water, sewer and solid waste infrastructure; manages energy efficiency and renewable energy programs; oversees land conservation projects; and manages and monitors state-owned fuel storage tanks.

Insurance Services Office (ISO)

A provider of statistical, actuarial, underwriting and claims information and analytics; compliance and fraud identification tools; policy language; information about specific locations; and technical services. **ISO** serves insurers, re-insurers, agents and brokers, insurance regulators, risk managers and other participants in the property/casualty insurance marketplace, e.g. fire and flood insurance.

Municipalities

Local government subdivisions within the County: Covington, Mansfield, Newborn, Mansfield, Oxford, Porterdale and Social Circle.

Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority (WSA)

The Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority was created by the State of Georgia Legislature in 1970 to serve the citizens of Newton County. Providing clean water, sewer maintenance and encouraging water conservation are its highest priorities. The Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority is governed by an 8-member board of directors. The five commission districts representing Newton County appoint one member from each district. The Cities of Covington, Oxford, and Porterdale also appoint one member each for a total of eight members. Each member serves a five year-term and can be reappointed in successive terms.

Newton County Government 101 (Citizens' Academy)

The purpose of this civics class, to be sponsored by the Newton County BOC, is to build a better understanding between citizens and the County government through education. Participants will become familiar with the operations of the County and gain a deeper understanding of the functions of local government.

Throughout the course of several weeks, participants will tour various departments and will hear from Department Heads and staff on topics such as finance, zoning, public works, elections etc.

Newton County Senior Services Center

A facility that offers a variety of recreational activities, wellness programs and information for those who are over the age of 55. The facility also offers on-site meals for seniors who are enrolled in the program and home delivery meals for seniors who qualify under local, state and federal guidelines.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) - A United States trade association, although with some international members, that creates and maintains private, copyrighted standards and codes for usage and adoption by local governments.

Open Meetings/Open Records Act

“Trust in the actions of elected officials is critical to the continued success of our representative form of government. A key factor in fostering this trust is the ease of access to meetings and records of local governments and other public agencies. Georgia’s open meetings and open records laws support this concept”.

[Association of County Commissioners of Georgia]

Principles of openness in government may be found in the Constitution of Georgia, the common-law of the State of Georgia, and the state statutes. The two Acts that apply to most meetings and records are known as the “Sunshine Laws.” These consist of the Open and Public Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 through 6) and the Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. §§ 50-18-70 through 76). The following briefly defines the two:

Open Meetings Act

The Georgia Open Meetings Law states that citizens of Georgia have a right to observe the process by which local officials make decisions that affect them. The Open Meetings law applies to meetings where there is a quorum of a board of commissioners, authority, commission, board, or committee gathers to discuss county business or any other public matter pertaining to the county, to take official action (i.e. vote) or to discuss or formulate recommendations on county business or policy.

Open Records Act

Generally, public records of a state or local agency are open to inspection by any citizen. Public records are documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, computer based or generated information, or similar material prepared and maintained or received in the course of operating a public agency. Records exempt from Georgia’s Open Records Act include those required to be kept confidential under federal law; medical records; law enforcement and prosecution records revealing confidential sources; records that would cause an electronic signature not to be under the control of the person using it; records that would reveal medical information about public employees, and vital records. Requests for records should: be made in writing; state with specificity what information is sought; be addressed to the governing body holding the records; and reference the Georgia Open Records Act.

Ordinances

Ordinances are laws and codes enacted and enforced at the local county or city level. Local ordinances cover many varied aspects of local government operations, public safety and business development, including but not limited to zoning and land use, appointed and elected boards and authorities’ powers, and general local government regulations.

Recreation Master Plan

This Plan reflects the County's and Recreation Commission's needs and priorities for parks, facilities and programs. The Master plan serves as a guide for the creating of local policy and decision making process while addressing recreation opportunities necessary to meet the needs of present and future stakeholders of Newton County. It

also aids with financial planning, staffing, land acquisition, improvements to existing parks, developing new parks and facilities. It is developed through a collaboration from stakeholders, Recreation staff, Recreation Commission, the County and outside professional assistance.

Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA)

This authority oversees all aspects of the County's solid waste system, including the landfill and convenience centers. The SWMA is a seven-member board consisting of four private citizens and three members of the Board of Commissioners of the Newton County Board of Commissioners (BOC), including the Chairman and two District Commissioners. All members of the SWMA are appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The SWMA is presided over by a chairman elected by the SWMA. All members vote, including the chairman of the SWMA.

SPLOST

A Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is an optional 1 percent county sales tax used to fund capital outlay projects proposed by the county government and participating qualified municipal governments. A SPLOST is imposed upon the approval of a local referendum by the voters of Newton County. In general, the tax may be levied for up to five years. If the County and municipalities enter into an intergovernmental agreement, the tax may be imposed for up to six years.

Bonded SPLOST project - SPLOST project funded by the issuance of General Obligation (GO) debt.

General Obligation debt - General Obligation (GO) debt is debt that will not be paid back within a year, typically in the form of a bond incurred by a county and backed by the full faith and credit of its taxing power. The voters can approve the issuance of GO bonds in conjunction with the SPLOST levy. Counties may issue debt to get projects underway promptly.

Trail Network Plan

This plan was adopted by the Newton County Board of Commissioners to link trails within Newton County that would extend from Newborn to Arabia Mountain in DeKalb County.

Transit Study

A study to determine the feasibility of public transportation in Newton County. Services to be considered include fixed route buses and on-demand services.

Transportation

All County infrastructure which provides for the movement of people and goods throughout Newton County.