

Sole Commissioner Andy Allen and Chief Appraiser Nancy Edgeman, Pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.), AllOnGeorgia respectfully requests access to and copies of the following records:

- 1. A list of current members of the Board of Assessors, including the date each member was appointed, who appointed them, and the length of their term.**

John Bailey was appointed by Jason Winters in November 2020 to fill an unexpired term of Randy Pauley that expired September 30, 2022. He was reappointed by Blake Ellsberry for a six-year term from October 2022 to September 2028.

Betty Brady - appointed by Jason Winters to fill an unexpired term of Gwyn Crabtree on February 7, 2018, the term expired 3-8-2021, She was reappointed by Blake Ellsberry for a six-year term that began March 9, 2021, and will expire March 8, 2027.

James Blair was appointed by Andy Allen for a six-year term from April 17, 2026, to April 6, 2030 (James Blair has resigned pending his replacement). Resigned due to personal reasons.

The county website currently lists only three members (correct**) please identify any members who have rolled off or resigned in the past two years, the date and reason for each departure, and why the vacant position(s) have not yet been filled.**

Kevin Payton was appointed by Blake Ellsberry and served from October 25, 2024, to January 2, 2025. No reason given.

Doug Wilson – Appointed by Jason Winters in September, 2013-2016 for a three-year term. Reappointed by Jason Winters from 2016 to 2019 for a three-year term. Reappointed by Jason Winters 2019-2022 for a three-year term. Reappointed by Blake Ellsberry 2022-2025 for a three-year term. Resigned August 1, 2025. Reason – ready to retire.

Cathy Brown – appointed by Andy Allen to fill the unexpired term of Kevin Payton that ended March 31, 2025. Cathy was appointed April 1, 2025, by Andy Allen for a five-year term. Reason - Cathy passed away July 10, 2026.

**The Board of Assessors now consists of three board members.
John Bailey, Betty Brady, and James Blair**

- 2. A description of the Board of Assessors' responsibilities, their meeting schedule, and the compensation provided to board members.**

Board of Assessor's responsibilities

The Board of Assessors is responsible for determining the fair market value of properties, ensuring uniformity in property assessments, and managing the appeals process for taxpayers. They also prepare the annual tax digest in compliance with state laws and regulations.

Duties of the Board of Assessors

The Board of Assessors plays a crucial role in property taxation.

- a. Property Valuation — The Board determines the fair market value of all real and personal property within the county.**
- b. Uniformity Maintenance — They ensure county-wide uniformity in property assessments, adhering to state laws.**
- c. Appeals Management — The Board receives and reviews appeals filed by taxpayers, ensuring proper handling of the appeal process.**
- d. Tax Digest Preparation — They are responsible for preparing an equitable tax digest annually, following applicable laws.**

Exemption Approval — The Board approves all exemptions.

The Board of Assessors meets as needed with no set schedule. The Board of Assessors is compensated at \$75 per meeting.

- 3. Of the more than 3,000 property assessment appeals filed last year, how many were resolved in the homeowner's favor?**
The Board received 236 appeals last year. 145 values were changed.
- 4. The minutes of the May 27 meeting at which the GMASS contract was approved. We note that Cathy Brown appears to have signed the minutes — please clarify whether she is a current member of the Board of Assessors, as she is not listed on the county website, and confirm whether she signed the minutes in that capacity. See attached minutes – Cathy Brown joined the meeting via telephone due to health reason and approved John Bailey to sign for her (note under attendance) Cathy Brown is no longer a board member (deceased).**
- 5. A copy of the current contract between Chattooga County and Georgia Mass Appraisal Services & Solutions, Inc. (GMASS). See attached**
- 6. Records of all payments made by the county to GMASS since January 1, 2025, including the date and amount of each payment Payments are made on a monthly schedule of \$13,194 (see commissioners office for records)**
- 7. The current number of employees in the Tax Assessor's Office and the office's current annual budget. The office currently has four Employees, and our 2026 budget was approved at \$586,987 which**

includes six employees and \$158,328 is paid to GMASS annually per contract for 2025-2027.

As provided under O.C.G.A. § 50-18-71, we ask that you respond to this request within three business days. To help minimize costs, we request that all responsive records be provided electronically, via email or a shared electronic file, rather than as physical copies.

If any portion of this request is denied, please cite the specific legal exemption relied upon for each redaction or withholding. If anticipated costs for copying or staff time exceed \$25, please notify us in advance with an estimate before proceeding.

Please let us know if any part of this request needs clarification. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Additionally, if any public statement is made regarding this matter, I would appreciate being added to the media distribution list so I can help share it with the public.

**Best,
Cole Cavin**