

CLERK OF SUPERIOR &
JUVENILE COURTS
FILED FOR RECORD

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF COLUMBIA COUNTY

2026 SEP 24 AM 11:24

STATE OF GEORGIA

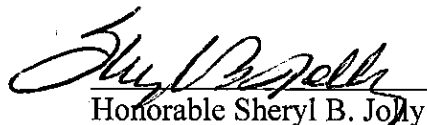
CINDY MASON, CLERK
COLUMBIA COUNTY GEORGIA

IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE MARCH TERM 2026

The Grand Jury having returned the attached presentment for the March Term 2026, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on September 24, 2026, it is now

ORDERED that the same presentment shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court for Columbia County, and that it shall be published once in The Columbia County News-Times, the legal gazette for said County.

It is so ORDERED this 24th day of September 2026.



Honorable Sheryl B. Jolly
Superior Court Judge
Columbia Judicial Circuit

RECORDED & SCANNED IN
MINUTES QW 9/24/26

**Grand Jury Report, March 2026 Term
Columbia County Real-Time Crime Center
September 10, 2026**

On September 10, members of the Grand Jury visited Columbia County's Real-Time Crime Center, located alongside the 911 communications operation serving Columbia County, Grovetown, and Harlem. Lt. Joe Baker of the Columbia County Sheriff's Office led the initial portion of the tour. Retired Lt. Jamey Moss, who helped design and build the center and continues to serve as a reserve with the Sheriff's Office, took over from there. Communications Officer Clayton Hall, also a certified drone pilot, demonstrated the systems and discussed incidents he had worked.

The Crime Center is comprised of a large room housing the 911 Call Center and connected to it is another room with a bank of Forty ~50-inch monitors covering an entire wall.

The visit helped us understand how the technology works behind the scenes in cases we had already heard. We typically heard 25 or more cases per session during our term. On September 10, we kept a count and found that 10 of the 27 cases heard that day involved assistance from the Real-Time Crime Center or a crime analyst. That was consistent with what we saw in every other session. During the tour, we saw examples of operators tracking suspects, directing deputies, and locating video evidence. We also saw how operators could give deputies information about a situation before they arrived.

Camera systems described during the visit:

- **Approximately 4,000 cameras** across the county's system cover intersections, public spaces, and county facilities. Often there are 4 Cameras per Intersection
- **92 Genetec AutoVu license plate readers** help identify vehicles connected to investigations and alerts.
- **Only one county-operated Flock camera.** Staff explained that this camera provides access to the broader Flock sharing network. Flock is a particular brand of license plate reader; the county primarily uses Genetec AutoVu.

We also learned more about the partnership with the Columbia County Board of Education. Staff demonstrated digital floor plans for all county public schools, including classroom locations and information for fire and medical responders. This helps operators see what is happening and direct responders to the right location in real-time and can identify threats and communicate that to responding officers.

Access controls and review procedures explained by staff:

- **Case numbers and reasons for searches:** Staff stated that license plate searches require a case number and a reason for the search.

- **Limited access:** Access to license plate search systems is provided to dispatchers, Crime Center personnel, investigators, selected patrol supervisors, and certain administrative personnel. It is not provided to every deputy.
- **Review of searches:** Lt. Baker explained that he pulls and reviews search activity. He gave an example of someone searching the same plate 20 times and checking whether those searches were connected to a case or call for service. He also described Flock's audit assistant, which uses AI to review search logs.
- **Verification of plate readings:** Operators check the plate image against the system's reading, and deputies are expected to confirm questionable readings before making a stop.
- **Retention of recordings:** Staff explained that routine camera footage is overwritten after 72 hours unless saved for a case. They said Flock data was set to be retained for 30 days.

As we were leaving the building, we had the opportunity to speak with Sheriff Clay Whittle, Chief Deputy Buddy Askew, and Major Andy Shedd. Sheriff Whittle noted that Columbia County's population has grown substantially in recent years, while its crime rate has not increased and its ability to solve cases has improved, all without increasing headcount. He credited the Crime Center as a large part of those results. He also acknowledged the partnership with the Board of Education and its role in keeping students safe.

We recommend keeping a simple log or database of cases where these systems made a difference. It could record the case number, which system was used, how it helped, and the outcome. Where practical, it could also note time or resources saved. This would give the Sheriff's Office an easier way to report its successes and show county leadership and residents what these investments are accomplishing.

Based on what we saw, we believe Columbia County's approach can serve as a model for agencies of all sizes, including local, state, and federal agencies across the country. We thank Lt. Baker, Lt. Moss, Officer Hall, and the staff for walking us through the operation and answering our questions. We also appreciate Sheriff Whittle, Chief Deputy Askew, and Major Shedd taking the time to speak with us.

Thomas Sherrouse, Foreperson
Eugene Butler
Jared Jennings
Quentin Mills
Charles Stewart

TO: The Honorable Sheryl B. Jolly
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Columbia County Grand Jury
March Term 2026

DATE: September 24, 2026

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

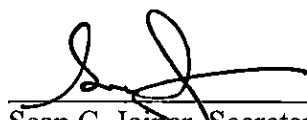
We, the members of the Columbia County Grand Jury, for the March Term 2026, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Barry A. Fleming on the 23rd day of March 2026, submit our presentment on the 24th day of September 2026, our last day as an official body of Grand Jurors.

To discharge our sworn functions, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on eleven (11) occasions during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictment presented to us by staff of the District Attorney. A Sub-Committee was formed to inspect the following Columbia County Sheriff's Office Crime Center.

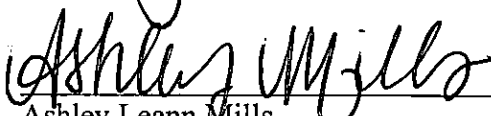
Respectfully, we present this presentment on the 24th day of September 2026 and request that it be published.


Thomas Dayton Sherrouse, Foreperson

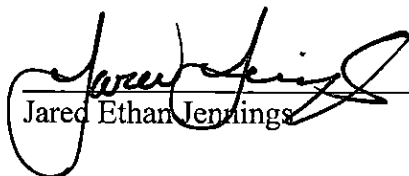

Norman David Cox, Assistant Foreperson


Sean C. Joiner, Secretary

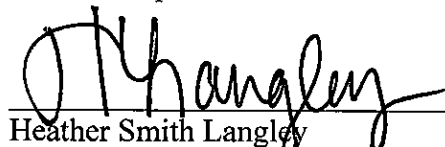

Stacy Beth Warren


Ashley Leann Mills

Megan O'Grady Mumford


Jared Ethan Jennings

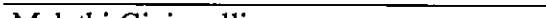
Anna Thompkins

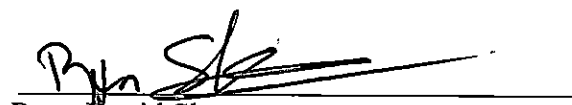

Heather Smith Langley


Cole Prichard James


Taylor Kristen Elmore


Paul John Vargo


Malathi Ginjupalli

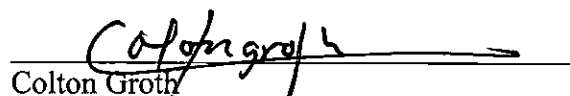

Ryan David Shearer


Bryan K. Nimmons

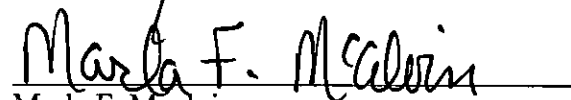

Lindsey Edmunds Walton


Eugene Butler

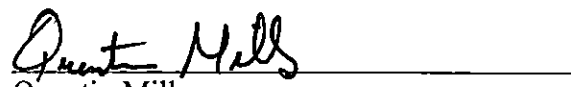

Charles Adolph Stewart, III

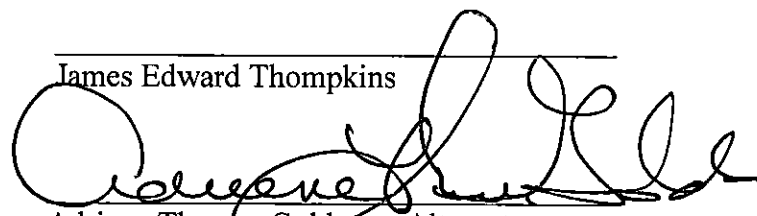

Colton Groth


Susanne Eva Upshaw


Marla F. Mcalvin


James Edward Thompkins


Quentin Mills


Adriene Thomas Goldman, Alternate


Brittany Williams, Alternate


Christine Adkins Bunch., Alternate