WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
DECEMBER 31, 2023

Milton CPA Services, LLC
Certified Public Accountant
Certified Internal Auditor
Certified Government Auditing Professional

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Page(s)
I. FINANCIAL SECTION	
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	1-3
BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:	
Government-wide Financial Statements:	
Statement of Net Position	4
Statement of Activities	5
Fund Financial Statements:	
Governmental Funds:	
Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds	6
Reconciliation of the Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds to the Statement of Net Position	7
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Funds	8
Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Funds to the Statement of Activities - Governmental Funds	9
Fiduciary Funds -	
Statement of Fiduciary Net Position – Custodial Funds	10
Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position	11
Notes to the Financial Statements	12-30
REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:	
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances - Budget and Actual - General Fund	31-32
Notes to Required Supplementary Information	33
COMBINING AND INDIVIDUAL FUND STATEMENTS AND SCHEDULES:	
Combining Balance Sheet - Nonmajor Governmental Funds	34
Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Nonmajor Governmental Funds	35
Combining Statement of Fiduciary Net Position - Custodial Funds	36
Combining Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position - Custodial Funds	37
Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures – Budget and Actual – Department of Transportation	38
Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures – Budget and Actual – Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC	39

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Page(s)
SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES:	
Schedule of Expenditures of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Proceeds	40-41

II. REPORTS REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENTAL AUDITING STANDARDS

Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Governmental Auditing Standards*	42-43
Schedule of Findings and Responses	44-45

I. FINANCIAL SECTION

- **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**
- **BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Milton CPA Services, LLC
49 West Oak Street
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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Wheeler County Board of Commissioners
Wheeler County, Georgia
Alamo, Georgia 30411

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Wheeler County, Georgia as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Wheeler County, Georgia's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Wheeler County, Georgia as of December 31, 2023, and the respective changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Wheeler County, Georgia, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Wheeler County, Georgia's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Wheeler County, Georgia s internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Wheeler County, Georgia 's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Management has omitted the Management's Discussion and Analysis for the year ended December 31, 2023 that accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require to be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such missing information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. Our opinion on the basic financial statements is not affected by this missing information.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the budgetary comparison information identified in the Required Supplementary Information section of the accompanying table of contents be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational or economic context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise Wheeler County, Georgia's basic financial statements. The combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements and the budgetary schedules presented on pages 34 through 39 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements, or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Information

In the conduct of our audit, we verified and tested expenditures of each project constructed or under construction, which were identified in the resolution or ordinance calling for imposition of the special sales and use tax authorized by OCGA, Section 48-8-110. The accompanying Schedule of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax on pages 40-41 lists each project and contains the information required by OCGA, Section 48-8-121. In our opinion this Schedule presents fairly the original estimated cost of each project, expenditures incurred and the estimated percentage of completion of each project through December 31, 2023 and in our opinion, are fairly stated in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

In connection with our audit of the basic financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the basic financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated May 31, 2024 on our consideration of the Authority's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the Authority's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Milton CPA Services, LLC

McRae Helena, Georgia

May 31, 2024

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Primary Government		Component Unit
	Governmental Activities	Prior Year	Wheeler County Public Health Center
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 4,821,391	$ 6,014,800	$ 647,298
Taxes receivable, net of uncollectible accounts	1,981,909	2,158,697	-
Other receivables	15,812	23,452	21,608
Prepaids	-	9,053	-
Capital assets:			
Nondepreciable	157,586	147,086	-
Depreciable, net	7,185,981	5,891,485	4,256
Total assets	14,162,679	14,244,573	673,162
DEFFERED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES	-	-	180,223
LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable	61,569	244,984	-
Other liabilities	657	1,193	19,279
Unearned revenue	932,349	1,473,532	-
Noncurrent liabilities:			
Proportionate share of collective net pension liability	-	-	338,999
Proportionate share of collective net OPEB liability	-	-	5,116
Due within one year	39,261	275,805	-
Due in more than one year	129,961	169,222	-
Total liabilities	1,163,797	2,164,736	363,394
DEFFERED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES	-	-	26,849
NET POSITION			
Net investment in capital assets	7,174,345	5,593,544	4,256
Restricted			
SPLOST	1,211,134	1,403,351	-
Transportation SPLOST	1,059,891	841,980	-
American rescue plan	2,634	1,423	
Multi-grant	1,491	1,491	-
Expendable trust	29,755	31,128	-
Sheriff commissary	7,307	9,104	-
Prior year program income	-	-	106,989
Unrestricted	3,512,325	4,197,816	351,897
Total net position	$ 12,998,882	$ 12,079,837	$ 463,142

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Functions/Programs	Expenses	Program Revenues: Charges for Services	Program Revenues: Operating Grants and Contributions
Primary government			
Governmental activities			
General governmen	$ 945,905	$ 295,969	$ 573,432
Judicial	449,997	198,132	-
Public safety	1,973,867	243,531	22,500
Public works	1,350,638	48,825	-
Health and welfare	337,382	177,810	-
Culture and recreation	138,882	4,381	-
Housing and developmen	130,399	-	-
Interest on long-term deb	14,355	-	-
Total primary governmen	$ 5,341,425	$ 968,648	$ 595,932
Component unit			
Wheeler County Public Health Center	$ 423,236	$ 70,421	$ 319,869
Total component units	$ 423,236	$ 70,421	$ 319,869

General revenues
Property taxes
Railroad equipment taxes
Sales taxes
Hotel and motel taxes
Beer and wine taxes
Insurance premium taxes
Intra/inter agency
Other local funds
Gain on sale of capital assets
Interest income

Total general revenues

Change in net position

Net position - beginning

Net position - ending

Program Revenues		Net (Expense) Revenue and Changes in Net Position		
		Primary Government		Component Unit
Capital Grants and Contributions		Governmental Activities	Prior Year	Wheeler County Public Health Center
$	-	$ (76,504)	$ 186,288	
	-	(251,865)	(281,371)	
	-	(1,707,836)	(1,694,197)	
	1,021	(1,300,792)	(1,294,315)	
	-	(159,572)	(100,355)	
	-	(134,501)	(132,380)	
	-	(130,399)	(120,130)	
	-	(14,355)	(9,748)	
$	1,021	(3,775,824)	(3,446,208)	
$	-			$ (32,946)
$	-			(32,946)
		3,153,106	2,721,138	-
		16,808	16,081	-
		1,177,843	1,083,180	-
		55,472	56,598	-
		2,745	4,353	-
		286,391	296,248	-
		-	-	36,457
		-	-	8,477
		-	55,558	-
		2,504	2,472	-
		4,694,869	4,235,628	44,934
		919,045	789,420	11,988
		12,079,837	11,290,417	451,154
		$ 12,998,882	$ 12,079,837	$ 463,142

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
BALANCE SHEET
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
DECEMBER 31, 2023

	General	SPLOST 2017
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,624,311	$ 968,301
Taxes receivable - net of uncollectible accounts	1,921,368	-
Other receivables	15,812	-
Total assets	$ 3,561,491	$ 968,301
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	$ 48,509	$ 30
Unearned revenue	-	-
Other liabilities	657	-
Total liabilities	49,166	30
DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES		
Unavailable revenue - property taxes	1,340,195	-
Total deferred inflows of resources	1,340,195	-
FUND BALANCES		
Restricted:		
SPLOST	-	968,271
Transportation SPLOST	-	-
American rescue plan	-	-
Sheriff Commissary	-	-
Multipurpose grant	-	-
Expendable trust	-	-
Unassigned	2,172,130	-
Total fund balances	2,172,130	968,271
Total liabilities, deferred inflows of resources and fund balances	$ 3,561,491	$ 968,301

Transportation SPLOST	America Rescue Plan	Nonmajor Funds	Total Governmental Funds
$ 999,350	$ 934,983	$ 294,446	$ 4,821,391
60,541	-	-	1,981,909
-	-	-	15,812
$ 1,059,891	$ 934,983	$ 294,446	$ 6,819,112
$ -	$ -	$ 13,030	$ 61,569
-	932,349	-	932,349
-	-	-	657
-	932,349	13,030	994,575
-	-	-	1,340,195
-	-	-	1,340,195
-	-	242,863	1,211,134
1,059,891	-	-	1,059,891
-	2,634	-	2,634
-	-	7,307	7,307
-	-	1,491	1,491
-	-	29,755	29,755
-	-	-	2,172,130
1,059,891	2,634	281,416	4,484,342
$ 1,059,891	$ 934,983	$ 294,446	$ 6,819,112

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
RECONCILIATION OF THE BALANCE SHEET - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2023

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:		
Total governmental fund balance (page 5)		$ 4,484,342
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources, and therefore, are not reported in the funds.		
Cost of capital assets	$ 12,509,426	
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,165,859)	7,343,567
Other long-term assets are not available to pay for current-period expenditures and, therefore, are reported as unavailable revenue in the funds.		1,340,195
Long-term liabilities, such as bonds payable and capital leases are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.		
Lease payable		(169,222)
Net position of governmental activities (page 3		$ 12,998,882

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	General	SPLOST 2017
REVENUES		
General property taxes	$ 3,387,198	$ -
Other taxes	582,564	127,623
Intergovernmental	171,746	-
Interest income	1,293	1,021
Other income	784,344	-
Total revenues	4,928,395	128,644
EXPENDITURES		
Current:		
General government	854,316	-
Judicial	438,331	-
Public safety	1,849,197	-
Public works	827,419	2,495
Health and welfare	329,611	-
Culture and recreation	106,736	-
Housing and development	74,927	-
Intergovernmental	-	58,998
Debt service:		
Principal	-	194,998
Interest	-	1,854
Capital outlay:		
General government	-	-
Public safety	42,264	37,000
Public works	856,993	16,500
Culture and recreation	-	6,539
Total expenditures	5,379,794	318,384
Net change in fund balances	(451,399)	(189,740)
Fund balances, beginning	2,623,529	1,158,011
Fund balances, ending	$ 2,172,130	$ 968,271

Transportation SPLOST	America Rescue Plan	Nonmajor Funds	Total Governmental Funds
$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,387,198
773,600	-	55,472	1,539,259
-	541,183	-	712,929
-	1,211	-	3,525
-	-	66,057	850,401
773,600	542,394	121,529	6,494,562
-	-	63,473	917,789
-	-	-	438,331
-	-	-	1,849,197
36,682	-	2,477	869,073
-	-	-	329,611
-	-	5,754	112,490
-	-	55,472	130,399
-	-	-	58,998
80,807	-	-	275,805
12,501	-	-	14,355
-	4,200	-	4,200
-	204,483	-	283,747
425,699	332,500	-	1,631,692
-	-	-	6,539
555,689	541,183	127,176	6,922,226
217,911	1,211	(5,647)	(427,664)
841,980	1,423	287,063	4,912,006
$ 1,059,891	$ 2,634	$ 281,416	$ 4,484,342

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities (page 4) are different because:		
Net change in fund balances - total governmental funds (page 7)		$ (427,664)
Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives and reported as depreciation expense.		
Capital outlay	$ 1,926,178	
Depreciation expense	(621,182)	1,304,996
Revenues in the statement of activities that are unearned at the time of reciept are not reported as revenues in the funds.		
Property taxes:		
Unavailable revenue - property taxes at December 31, 2022	$ 1,340,195	
Unavailable revenue - property taxes at December 31, 2021	(1,574,287)	(234,092)
The issuance of long-term debt (e.g. bonds, leases), provides current financial resources to governmental funds, while the repayment of the principal of long-term debt consumes the current financial resources of governmental funds. Neither transaction, however, has any effect on net position. This amount is the net effect of these differences in the treatment of long-term debt and related items.		
Lease proceeds	$ -	
Repayment of long-term debt	275,805	275,805
Change in net position of governmental activities (page 4		$ 919,045

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF FIDUCIARY NET POSITION
CUSTODIAL FUNDS
DECEMBER 31, 2023

ASSETS		
Cash	$	503,846
Taxes receivable (net allowance for uncollectible accounts)		1,832,065
Total assets	$	2,335,911
NET POSITION		
Net position - held for others	$	2,335,911
Total net position	$	2,335,911

The accompanying Notes to Financial Statements are an integral part of these statements.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FIDUCIARY NET POSITION
CUSTODIAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Total Custodial Funds
ADDITIONS	
Taxes collected for other agencies	$ 2,231,480
Court fees collected for other agencies	92,899
Court individual cases	176,295
Sheriff fees collected	119,811
Total additions	2,620,485
DEDUCTIONS	
Payments of court fees to other agencies	133,814
Payments to others	213,873
Payments of taxes to other agencies	1,949,803
Total deductions	2,297,490
Change in net position	322,995
Net position - beginning	2,012,916
Net position - ending	$ 2,335,911

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. Description of government-wide financial statements

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all of the nonfiduciary activities of the primary government and its component units. All fiduciary activities are reported only in the fund financial statements. *Governmental activities*, which normally are supported by taxes, intergovernmental revenues, and other nonexchange transactions, are reported separately from *business-type activities*, which rely to a significant extent on fees and charges to external customers for support. Likewise, the *primary government* is reported separately from certain legally separate *component units* for which the primary government is financially accountable.

B. Reporting entity

Wheeler County, Georgia (the County), was incorporated August 14, 1912, under provisions of the laws of the State of Georgia. The County operates under a three member board of commissioners form of government and provides the following services in addition to general administrative responsibilities: public safety, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, health and sanitation.

In evaluating the County as a reporting entity, management has addressed all potential component units (traditionally separate reporting entities) for which the County may be financially accountable and, as such, should be included within the County's financial statements. The County (the primary government) is financially accountable if it appoints a voting majority of the organization's governing board and (1) it is able to impose its will on the organization or (2) there is a potential for the organization to provide specific financial burden on the County. Additionally, the primary government is required to consider other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that exclusion would cause the reporting entity's financial statements to be misleading or incomplete. The component units are discretely presented and are reported in a separate column in the government-wide financial statements to emphasize that they are legally separate from the County.

A brief descriptions of the discretely presented component unit follows:

Wheeler County Board of Health - Provides for various health services for citizens in Wheeler County under a contract with the Georgia Department of Public Health. The County appoints the majority of the Board of Directors and has a significant relationship with the Board of Health. The Health Department is reported on a June 30, 2023 fiscal year. Complete financial statements for the Health Department may be obtained from its administrative office by calling 912-568-7161.

Governmental accounting standards require reasonable separation between the Primary Government and it's discretely presented component units, both in the financial statements and in the related notes and required supplementary information. Because the discretely presented component unit, although legally separate, have been and are operated as if it is part of the primary government, there are limited instances where special note reference or separation will be required. If no separate note reference or categorization is made, the user should assume that information presented is equally applicable.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

C. Basis of presentation – government-wide financial statements

While separate government-wide and fund financial statements are presented, they are interrelated. The governmental activities column incorporates data from governmental funds, while business-type activities (as applicable) incorporate data from the government's enterprise fund. Separate financial statements are provided for governmental funds, proprietary funds, and fiduciary funds, even though the latter are excluded from the government-wide financial statements.

As discussed earlier, the County has one discretely presented component unit. While it is not considered to be a major component unit, it is nevertheless shown in a separate column in the government-wide financial statements.

D. Basis of presentation – fund financial statements

The fund financial statements provide information about the County's funds, including its fiduciary funds and blended component units. Separate statements for each fund category - governmental, proprietary, and fiduciary—are presented. The emphasis of fund financial statements is on major governmental and enterprise funds, each displayed in a separate column. All remaining governmental and enterprise funds are aggregated and reported as nonmajor funds. Major individual governmental and enterprise funds are reported as separate columns in the fund financial statements.

The County reports the following major governmental funds:

General Fund is the general operating fund of the County. It is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

SPLOST 2017 Capital Projects Fund accounts for 1% sales tax proceeds required to be used for capital outlay for equipment and infrastructure enhancement purposes as authorized by local referendum.

Transportation SPLOST accounts for the sales tax proceeds and related capital outlay and other expenditures related to the Transportation Investment Act.

American Rescue Plan accounts for emergency funding for eligible state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

Additionally, the County reports the following fund types:

Capital Project Funds accounts for the grant or other proceeds and related capital outlay and other expenditures.

Special Revenue Funds - Used to account for the proceeds of revenue sources other than special assessments, or major capital projects that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes.

Custodial Funds - Used to account for assets held by the County in a trustee capacity or as an agent for individuals, private organizations, other governments, and/or other funds. Agency Funds are custodial in nature (assets equal liabilities) and do not involve measurement of results of operations.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

During the course of operations the County may have activity between funds for various purposes. Any residual balances outstanding at year end are reported as due from/to other funds. While these balances are reported in fund financial statements, certain eliminations are made in the preparation of the government-wide financial statements. Balances between the funds included in governmental activities are eliminated so that only the net amount is included as internal balances in the governmental activities column.

Further, certain activity may occur during the year involving transfers of resources between funds. In fund financial statements these amounts are reported at gross amounts as transfers in/out. While reported in fund financial statements, certain eliminations are made in the preparation of the government-wide financial statements. Transfers between the funds included in governmental activities are eliminated so that only the net amount is included as transfers in the governmental activities column. Similarly, (as applicable) balances between the funds included in business-type activities are eliminated so that only the net amount is included as transfers in the business-type activities column.

E. Measurement focus and basis of accounting

The accounting and financial reporting treatment is determined by the applicable measurement focus and basis of accounting. Measurement focus indicates the type of resources being measured such as *current financial resources* or *economic resources.* The basis of accounting indicates the timing of transactions or events for recognition in the financial statements.

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the *economic resources measurement focus* and the *accrual basis of accounting*. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Property taxes are recognized as revenues in the year for which they are levied. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

The governmental fund financial statements are reported using the *current financial resources measurement focus* and the *modified accrual basis of accounting*. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. Revenues are considered to be available when they are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, the government considers revenues to be available if they are collected within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period. Expenditures generally are recorded when a liability is incurred, as under accrual accounting. However, debt service expenditures, as well as expenditures related to compensated absences, and claims and judgments, are recorded only when payment is due. General capital asset acquisitions are reported as expenditures in governmental funds. Issuance of long-term debt and acquisitions under capital leases are reported as other financing sources.

Property taxes, sales taxes, franchise taxes, licenses, and interest associated with the current fiscal period are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and so have been recognized as revenues of the current fiscal period. Expenditure-driven grants are recognized as revenue when the qualifying expenditures have been incurred and all other eligibility requirements have been met, and the amount is received during the period or within the availability period for this revenue source (within 60 days of year end). All other revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the County.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Fiduciary funds are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting and are used to account for assets held on behalf of outside parties, including other governments, or on behalf of other funds within the government. Custodial funds generally are used to account for assets that the government holds on behalf of others as their agent.

F. Assets, liabilities, deferred outflows/inflows of resources, and net position/fund balance

1. ***Cash and Cash Equivalents*** - include amounts in demand deposits as well as short-term investments with a maturity date within three months of the date acquired by the County.

   State statutes authorize the County to invest in obligations of the U.S. Treasury, commercial paper, corporate bonds, repurchase agreements and investment pools. Investments in non-negotiable certificates of deposit are stated using a cost-based measure.

2. ***Short-term Interfund Receivables/Payables*** - During the course of operations, numerous transactions occur between individual funds for goods provided or services rendered. The purpose of the interfund balances is to account for those transactions that have not been settled as of the financial statement date. These receivables and payables are classified as "due from other funds" or "due to other funds" on the respective fund's balance sheet and as internal balances on the statement of net position. All interfund balances shown are expected to be settled within one year.

3. ***Taxes Receivable and Other Receivables*** - Taxes receivable and other receivables, are shown net of an allowance for uncollectible accounts. The allowance for general government accounts receivable is derived from the age of the individual receivable and consists of a percentage of the receivable, based upon actual historical losses.

4. ***Prepaid Items*** - Payments made to vendors for services that will benefit periods beyond December 31, 2023, are recorded as prepaid items. Prepaid items are expensed using the consumption method.

5. ***Capital Assets*** - Capital assets purchased or acquired are carried at historical cost or estimated historical cost. Contributed assets are recorded at fair market value as of the date donated. Additions, improvements and other capital outlays that significantly extend the useful life of an asset are capitalized in the government-wide financial statements to the extent the County's capitalization threshold of $5,000 is met. Other costs incurred for repairs and maintenance are expensed as incurred. Depreciation on capital assets is calculated on the straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the respective assets as follows:

• Infrastructure	20 - 40 years
• Buildings and plant	40 years
• Machinery and equipment	5 - 20 years
• Intangible lease assets	5 years

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

6. Compensated Absences **-** National Council on Governmental Accounting Statement 4, effective for fiscal years beginning after December 31, 1982, requires that vacation and sick pay benefits be accrued when: 1) the employer's obligation to employees' right to receive compensation for future benefits is attributable to employee's service already rendered; 2) the obligation relates to rights that vest or accumulate; 3) payment of the compensation is probable; and 4) the amount can be reasonably estimated.

The County compensates all employees for unused vacation at fiscal year-end; therefore, no accrual for vacation is necessary at December 31, 2023.

There is no liability for unpaid accumulated sick leave since the County does not have a policy to pay any amounts when the employees separate from service with the County.

7. Long-term Obligations - In the government-wide financial statements and proprietary fund types in the fund financial statements, long-term debt and other long-term obligations are reported as liabilities in the applicable governmental activities, business-type activities, or proprietary fund type statement of net assets. Bond premiums and discounts are deferred and amortized over the life of the bonds using the effective interest method. Bonds payable are reported net of the applicable bond premium or discount. Bond issuance costs are reported as deferred charges and amortized over the term of the related debt. In the fund financial statements, governmental fund types recognize bond premiums and discounts, as well as bond issuance costs, during the current period. The face amount of debt issued is reported as other financing sources. Premiums received on debt issuances are reported as other financing sources while discounts on debt issuances are reported as other financing uses. Issuance costs, whether or not withheld from the actual debt proceeds received, are reported as debt service expenditures.

8. Leases - In fiscal year 2023, the County implemented GASB Statement No. 87, *Leases*. This statement requires a lessee to recognize a lease liability and right-to-use asset on the statement of net position. The County's contracts and agreements were reviewed and evaluated for eligibility of this standard. It was concluded that this statement has no material impact on the net position of the County and thus lease liabilities and right-to-use assets related to leases are not presented in the County's financial statements. County contracts and agreements will be reviewed annually for GASB 87 eligibility.

9. Subscription-Based IT Arrangements - In fiscal year 2023, the County implemented GASB Statement No. 96, Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs). This statement provides guidance on the accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs) for government end users (governments) and established that a SBITA results in a right-to-use subscription asset – an intangible asset – and a corresponding subscription liability. The County's contracts and agreements were reviewed and evaluated for eligibility of this standard. It was concluded that this statement has no material impact on the net position of the County and thus lease liabilities and right-to-use subscription assets are not presented in the City's financial statements. County subscriptions and contracts will be reviewed annually for GASB 96 eligibility.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

10. Deferred outflows/inflows of resources

In addition to assets, the statement of financial position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, *deferred outflows of resources*, represents a consumption of net position that applies to a future period(s) and so will *not* be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/ expenditure) until then. The County has no item that qualifies for reporting in this category.

In addition to liabilities, the statement of financial position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, *deferred inflows of resources,* represents an acquisition of net position that applies to a future period(s) and so will *not* be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time. The County has only one type of item, which arises only under a modified accrual basis of accounting that qualifies for reporting in this category. Accordingly, the item, *unavailable revenue,* is reported only in the governmental funds balance sheet. The governmental funds report unavailable revenues from one source: property taxes. These amounts are deferred and recognized as an inflow of resources in the period that the amounts become available.

11. Fund Equity:

Fund equity at the governmental fund financial reporting level is classified as "fund balance". Fund equity for all other reporting is classified as "net position".

Fund Balance - Generally, fund balance represents the difference between the current assets and current liabilities. In the fund financial statements, governmental funds report fund balance classifications that comprise a hierarchy based primarily on the extent to which the County is bound to honor constraints on the specific purposes for which amounts in those funds can be spent. Fund balances are classified as follows:

- **Nonspendable** - fund balances are reported as nonspendable when amounts cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form (ie., items that are not expected to be converted to cash) or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained intact.

- **Restricted** - fund balances are reported as restricted when there are limitations imposed on their use either through the enabling legislation adopted by the County or through external restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors or laws or regulations of other governments

- **Committed -** fund balances are reported as committed when they can be used only for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the County Commissioners through the adoption of a resolution. The County Commissioners also may modify or rescind the commitment.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- **Assigned** - fund balances are reported as assigned when amounts are constrained by the County's intent to be used for specific purpose, but are neither restricted nor committed. Through resolution, the County Commissioners have authorized the Chairman to assign fund balances.

- **Unassigned** - fund balances are reported as unassigned as the residual amount when the balances do not meet any of the above criterion. The County reports positive unassigned fund balance only in the general fund. Negative unassigned fund balances may be reported in all funds.

12. Fund balance flow assumptions

Sometimes the County will fund outlays for a particular purpose from both restricted and unrestricted resources (the total of committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balance). In order to calculate the amounts to report as restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balance in the governmental fund financial statements a flow assumption must be made about the order in which the resources are considered to be applied. It is the County's policy to consider restricted fund balance to have been depleted before using any of the components of unrestricted fund balance. Further, when the components of unrestricted fund balance can be used for the same purpose, committed fund balance is depleted first, followed by assigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balance is applied last.

13. Net position flow assumption

Sometimes the County will fund outlays for a particular purpose from both restricted (e.g., restricted bond or grant proceeds) and unrestricted resources. In order to calculate the amounts to report as restricted – net position and unrestricted – net position in the government-wide and proprietary fund financial statements, a flow assumption must be made about the order in which the resources are considered to be applied.

It is the County's policy to consider restricted – net position to have been depleted before unrestricted - net position is applied.

14. Management Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures/expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

G. Revenues and expenditures/expenses

1. Program revenues

Amounts reported as program revenues include 1) charges to customers or applicants who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services, or privileges provided by a given function or segment and 2) grants and contributions (including special assessments) that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular function or segment. All taxes, including those dedicated for specific purposes, and other internally dedicated resources are reported as general revenues rather than as program revenues.

2. Property Taxes

Property taxes attach as an enforceable lien on property as of January 1. Property taxes for 2023 were levied by the County on December 14, 2023 and were due on March 15, 2024. The tax rate assessed for 2023 property taxes was $13.922 per $1,000 of assessed taxable property value for the unincorporated areas of Wheeler County, and $17.929 per $1,000 of assessed taxable property value for the incorporated areas. The taxable values for the unincorporated and incorporated areas amounted to $99,707,883 and $51,925,428 respectively.

H. Subsequent events

Management has evaluated subsequent events through the date that the financial statements were available to be issued, May 31, 2024 and determined there were no events that occurred that required disclosure.

II. STEWARDSHIP, COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Budgetary basis of accounting

The County's procedures in establishing, maintaining and revising budgetary data reflected in the financial statements are as follows: Prior to January 1, the Board of Commissioners (the Board) prepares a proposed operating budget for the fiscal year commencing the following January 1. The operating budget includes proposed expenditures and expected means of financing. Public hearings are conducted in the Board's Office to obtain taxpayer comments. Prior to January 1, the budget is legally enacted through approval by the Board. The Board is authorized to transfer budgeted amounts between departments within any fund. Formal budgetary integration is employed as a management control device during the year for the General and Special Revenue Funds. Budgets for the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds are adopted on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles. All appropriations lapse at the end of the fiscal year on December 31st.

II. STEWARDSHIP, COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

B. Encumbrances

Encumbrances accounting, the method by which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for expenditures of funds are recorded in order to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriation of expected revenues, is not utilized by the County because it is, at present, not considered necessary to assure effective budgetary control or to facilitate effective cash planning and control.

C. Expenditures exceed appropriations

During the year ended December 31, 2023, expenditures exceeded appropriations in the following functions:

	Expenditures	Appropriations	Variance
General fund:			
Sheriff	948,191	806,937	(141,254)
Fire	18,133	12,700	(5,433)
Emergency medical services	596,544	497,794	(98,750)
Other protection	264,976	221,493	(43,483)
Conservation	66,945	66,518	(427)
Airport	7,982	7,000	(982)
Capital outlay - Public works	856,993	77,000	(779,993)

The County absorbed these excesses as a result of expenditures at other department levels not exceeding budgeted totals, revenues and available fund balance.

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

A. Deposits and Investments

A summary of the County's deposits and investments at December 31, 2023 follows:

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

Account Balances	
Petty cash	$ 400
Demand deposits	5,407,313
Certificates of deposit	60,976
	$ 5,468,689

Ownership of Funds	
Primary Government -	
Governmental funds	$ 4,821,391
Component Unit -	
Wheeler County Public Health Center	647,298
Total reporting entity	$ 5,468,689

Custodial Credit Risk is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the County's deposits (in excess of FDIC insurance) may not be returned to us.

***Deposits**:*

The County's deposits at year-end were entirely covered by federal depository insurance or by collateral held by the County's custodial banks in the County's name.

Investments:

Interest Rate Risk is the risk that changes in interest rates will adversely affect the value of an investment. The County does not have a formal investment policy that limits investment maturities as a means of managing its exposure to fair value losses arising from increasing interest rates.

Credit Risk is the risk that an issuer or counterparty to an investment will not fulfill its obligations. The County has no investment policy that would further limit its investment choices from those authorized and listed in Note I F 1.

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

B. Taxes Receivable and Allowances for Uncollectible Accounts

Taxes receivable and allowances for uncollectible accounts at December 31, 2023 are as follows:

	Receivable	Allowance	Net
General Fund	$ 2,027,542	$ (106,174)	$ 1,921,368
Transportation SPLOST	60,541	-	60,541
Total	$ 2,088,083	$ (106,174)	$ 1,981,909

Property tax revenues are recognized when they have become available. Available means when due, or past due and receivable within the current period or expected to be collected soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. Taxes relating to the current budget and collected within 60 days after the fiscal year end are recognized as revenue currently.

C. Interfund Receivables and Payables

Generally, outstanding balances between funds reported as due to/from other funds includes outstanding charges by one fund to another for services or goods, subsidy commitments outstanding, and other miscellaneous receivables and payable s between funds. Balances to which a fiduciary fund is a party are treated as external receivables and payables.

The County had no interfund receivables and payables at December 31, 2023.

D. Transfers

Transfers are used to move revenues from the fund that statute or budget requires to collect them to the fund that statute or budget requires to expend them; to move unrestricted revenues collected in the funds to finance various programs accounted for in other funds in accordance with budgetary authorizations; and to segregate money for anticipated capital projects.

The County had no interfund transfers for the year ended December 31, 2023.

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

E. Capital Assets

Following is a summary of changes in capital assets:

Primary Government:

	Balance December 31, 2021	Additions	Transfers/ Retirements	Balance December 31, 2022
Capital assets, not being depreciated:				
Land	$ 147,086	$ 5,000	$ -	$ 152,086
Construction in progress	-	5,500	-	5,500
Total capital assets not being depreciated	147,086	10,500	-	157,586
Capital assets, being depreciated:				
Infrastructure	5,317,829	1,159,567	-	6,477,396
Buildings and improvements	2,307,019	17,539	-	2,324,558
Machinery and equipment	3,360,228	738,572	(952,890)	3,145,910
Intangible lease asset - equipment	403,977	-	-	403,977
Total capital assets being depreciated	11,389,053	1,915,678	(952,890)	12,351,841
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Infrastructure	1,394,223	259,872	-	1,654,095
Buildings and improvements	998,603	63,718	-	1,062,321
Machinery and equipment	2,882,966	249,690	(952,890)	2,179,766
Intangible lease asset - equipment	221,776	47,902	-	269,678
Total accumulated depreciation	5,497,568	621,182	(952,890)	5,165,860
Governmental activities capital assets, net	$ 6,038,571	$ 1,304,996	$ -	$ 7,343,567

Depreciation expense was charged to functions / programs as follows:

General government	$ 28,116
Judicial	11,666
Public safety	124,670
Public works	422,567
Health and welfare	7,771
Culture and recreation	26,392
Total depreciation expense	$ 621,182

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

Component Units:

	Balance June 30, 2022	Additions	Transfers/ Retirements	Balance June 30, 2023
Capital assets, being depreciated:				
Equipment and vehicles	$ 18,500	$ -	$ -	$ 18,500
Total capital assets being depreciated	18,500	-	-	18,500
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Equipment and vehicles	13,180	1,064	-	14,244
Total accumulated depreciation	13,180	1,064	-	14,244
Governmental activities capital assets, net	$ 5,320	$ (1,064)	$ -	$ 4,256

Depreciation expense was charged to functions / programs as follows:

Component unit:	
Wheeler County Public Health Center	$ 1,064

F. Short-Term Obligations

Tax Anticipation Note Payable

From time to time the County will have issued a tax anticipation note due on December 31st of each year. The notes are issued for cash flow purposes and are retired from the property tax revenues collected. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the County did not issue a tax anticipation note.

G. Long-Term Obligations

The following is a summary of changes in long-term obligations of the County for the year ended December 31, 2023:

	Beginning Balance	Additions	Payments/ Retirements	Ending Balance	Current Portion	Long-term Portion
Governmental activities -						
General obligation sales tax bond - Series 2017	195,000	-	(195,000)	-	-	-
Lease liability	250,027	-	(80,805)	169,222	39,261	129,961
Governmental activities - long-term liabilities	$ 445,027	$ -	$ (275,805)	$ 169,222	$ 39,261	$ 129,961

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

General Obligation Sales Tax Bond, Series 2018

During fiscal year 2017 Wheeler County voters passed a one percent special local option sales tax for funding various capital projects. In January 2018, the County issued $1,080,000 of general obligation sales tax bonds, series 2017. The total proceeds of the bond net of issuance costs totaled $1,033,940. The bonds were issued to provide immediate funding for one of the capital projects. The bonds are to be repaid from the sales tax proceeds and require that annually, the sales tax be set aside in a sinking fund sufficient to pay that year's debt service before any sales tax proceeds are utilized for capital project expenditures. During 2023 the bonds were paid off.

Lease Liability

During fiscal year 2018, Wheeler County entered into a lease agreement with Caterpillar Financial for the right to use a 140K Motorgrader for the highways and streets department. The lease agreement had an original amount of $197,363 payable in annual payments of $45,586 beginning in March 2019 and ending March 2023 at an interest rate of 5%. During 2023 the lease was paid off.

During fiscal year 2023, Wheeler County entered into a lease agreement with Caterpillar Financial for the right to use a 140 Cat Motorgrader for the highways and streets department. The lease agreement had an original amount of $206,614 payable in annual payments of $47,723 beginning in April 2023 and ending April 2027 at an interest rate of 5%. Annual debt service requirements as of December 31, 2023 are as follows:

Year Ending December 31,	Principal	Interest	Total Payment
2024	$ 39,261	$ 8,461	$ 47,722
2025	41,225	6,498	47,723
2026	43,286	4,437	47,723
2027	45,450	2,273	47,723
	$ 169,222	$ 21,669	$ 190,891

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

H. Fund Equity

Fund Balances:

- ***Restricted*** – The following fund balances are restricted for:

Capital Projects Fund:	
SPLOST 2017 & 2011 – used to account for capital projects financed with SPLOST	$ 1,211,134
Tranportation SPLOST – used to account for capital projects financed with TSPLOST	1,059,891
Special Revenue Funds:	
American Rescue Plan - accounts for emergency funding for response to the COVID-19 emergency	2,634
Multipurpose Grant – used to account for grant proceeds and expenditures to be used for specific purposes as called for in grant agreements	1,491
Expendable Trust – used to provide resources for the operating activities of the law library	29,755
Sheriff Commissary – Used to account for the activities of the inmate canteen	7,307
	$ 2,312,212

Net Position:

Net Investment in capital assets reported on the government-wide statement of net position as of December 31, 2023 are as follows:

	Governmental Activities
Net investment in capital assets	
Cost of capital assets	$ 12,509,426
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,165,859)
Book value	7,343,567
Less capital related debt	(169,222)
Net investment in capital assets	$ 7,174,345

III. DETAILED NOTES ON ALL ACTIVITIES AND FUNDS

I. Retirement Commitments

The following retirement and pension plans are in effect for County officials but are under control of the State of Georgia, not the County:

A. Probate Judges' Retirement Fund of Georgia

The Probate Judge is covered under a pension plan, which requires that certain sums from marriage licenses and fines or bond forfeitures be remitted to the pension plan before the payment of any costs or other claims.

B. Clerk of Superior Court Retirement Fund

The Clerk of Superior Court is covered under a pension plan, which requires that certain sums from fees and fines or bond forfeitures be remitted to the pension plan before the payment of any costs or other claims.

C. Sheriff's Retirement Fund/Peace Officer's Annuity and Benefit Fund

The Sheriff and sheriff's deputies are covered under separate pension plans, which require that certain sums from fines or bond forfeitures be remitted by the Probate Judge and Clerk of Superior Court to the pension plans before the payment of any costs or other claims.

J. Commitments and Contingencies

The County receives grant monies for various purposes. All grant monies received by the County are subject to examination and adjustment by the applicable governmental agency or their designee. However, in the opinion of the County officials, adjustments resulting from such examination are not expected to differ materially from amounts reflected in the accompanying financial statements.

There are several lawsuits pending in which the County is involved. The County Attorney has advised that potential claims against the County resulting from such litigation are such that they would not materially affect the financial statements of the County.

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Risk Management

The County is exposed to various risks of loss related to tort; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; injuries to employees; and natural disasters. During the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, the County was covered by general liability insurance with Scottsdale Indemnity General Liability through Stamps-Walker Insurance Agency.

The County is also part of the ACCG Group Self-Insurance Workers Compensation Fund, a public entity risk pool currently operating as a common risk management and insurance program for member local governments.

As part of this risk pool, the Government is obligated to pay all contributions and assessments as prescribed by the pool, to cooperate with the pool's agents and attorneys, to follow loss reduction procedures established by the fund, and to report as promptly as possible, and in accordance with any coverage descriptions issued, all incidents which could result in the fund being required to pay any claim of loss. The County is also to allow the pool's agents and attorneys to represent the County in investigation, settlement discussions and all levels of litigation arising out of any claim made against the County within the scope of loss protection furnished by the fund.

The responsibilities of the pool are to defend, in the name of and on behalf of the members, any suits or other proceedings which may at any time be instituted against them on account of injuries or death within the preview of the Workers' Compensation Law of Georgia, or on the basis of employer's liability. The pool is to pay all costs taxed against members in any legal proceeding defended by the members, all interest accruing after entry of judgment and all expenses incurred for investigation, negotiation or defense.

B. Landfill Closure and Post closure Care Costs

State and federal laws and regulations require the County to place a final cover on its landfill site when it stops accepting waste and to perform certain maintenance and monitoring functions at the site for thirty years after closure. Although closure and post-closure costs will be paid only near or after the date that the landfill stops accepting waste, the County reports a portion of these closure and post-closure care costs as an operating expense in each period based on landfill capacity used as of each balance sheet date.

The County closed its landfill in 1998 and will continue to monitor functions at the site for the next twenty-five years. As of December 31, 2023, the landfill has reached 100% capacity and recognized $335,490 of the estimated total closure and post-closure costs of $335,490. Actual costs for closure and post-closure may be higher due to inflation, changes in technology, or changes in regulation.

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

C. Joint Venture

Wheeler County, in conjunction with cities and counties in the sixteen (16) county Heart of Georgia area are members of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (RC). Membership in an RC is automatic for each municipality and county in the state. The official Code of Georgia Section 50-8-34 (Georgia Planning Act of 1989) provides for the organizational structure of the RCs. Each county and municipality in the state is required by law to pay minimum annual dues to the RC. The county paid annual dues in the amount of $5,850 to the RC for the year ended December 31, 2023. The RC Board membership includes the chief elected official of each county and the chief elected official of each municipality. The County board members and municipal board members from the same county elect one member of the Board who is a resident (but not an elected or appointed official or employee of the County or municipality) to serve as the nonpublic Board member from a County. Copies of the RC's financial statements may be obtained from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission.

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (O.C.G.A. 50-8-34) defines RCs as "public agencies and instrumentalities of their members". Georgia laws also provide that the member governments are liable for any debts or obligations of a RC beyond its resources. (O.C.G.A. 50-8-39.1)

D. Hotel/Motel Tax

The County levies a hotel/motel tax under the provisions of O.C.G.A. 48-13-51. The code section provides that the County shall expend for the purpose of promoting tourism, conventions, and trade shows a percentage of the total taxes collected under this Code section which is not less than the percentage of such tax collections expended for such purposes during the immediately preceding fiscal year. During 2023, the County received $55,472 in hotel/motel tax. The County distributed $27,736 to the Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce and $27,736 to the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The expended amounts total 100% of the amount received by the County.

For the year ended December 31, 2023, the County has complied with the expenditure requirements of code section 48-13-51.

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

E. Defined Contribution Plan

The County's defined contribution plan, the Wheeler County Deferred Compensation Plan (the "Plan"), allows employees to contribute pretax to a retirement annuity with a portion matched by the County. Matching portions by the County are determined based on number of years of service for the County. The plan is affiliated with the National Association of Counties and is administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions, Inc. The Plan was established under the Internal Revenue Service Code Section 457(b) and the County is assigned the authority to establish and amend the provisions of the Plan.

Employees are not required to contribute to the plan but may begin contributing once employed by the County. The County has chosen to match a portion of the amounts contributed by the employees based on number of years experience. Once an employee has reached 2 years of service, the County matches amounts paid by employees up to 2 percent of the employee's gross salary. After 5 years of service, the County matches 3 percent of the employee's gross salary. In the employee's 10^{th} year of service, the County matches 4 percent of the employee's gross salary and after 15 years of service, the County matches 5 percent of the employee's gross salary. Five percent is the maximum the County will match.

During 2023, County employees contributed $25,033 and the County matched $16,587.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES -
BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Budgeted Amounts			Variance with Final Budget - Over (Under)
	Original	Final	Actual	
REVENUES				
General property taxes	$ 2,624,191	$ 2,624,191	$ 3,387,198	$ 763,007
Other taxes	901,440	901,440	582,564	(318,876)
Licenses and permits	1,250	1,250	1,250	-
Intergovernmental	521,457	521,457	171,746	(349,711)
Interest income	1,000	1,000	1,293	293
Other income	764,900	764,900	784,344	19,444
Total revenues	4,814,238	4,814,238	4,928,395	114,157
EXPENDITURES				
Current:				
General government:				
General government	486,826	486,826	421,894	(64,932)
Elections	86,436	86,436	69,455	(16,981)
General adminstration	468,806	468,806	362,967	(105,839)
Judicial	497,432	497,432	438,331	(59,101)
Public safety:				
Sheriff	806,937	806,937	948,191	141,254
Fire	12,700	12,700	18,133	5,433
Emergency medical services	497,794	497,794	596,544	98,750
Coroner / medical examiner	21,466	21,466	21,353	(113)
Other protection	221,493	221,493	264,976	43,483
Public works:				
Highways and streets	901,248	901,248	581,298	(319,950)
Solid waste and recycling	297,723	297,723	246,121	(51,602)
Health and welfare:				
Health	55,984	55,984	55,576	(408)
Welfare	2,800	2,800	2,800	-
Community services	289,345	289,345	271,235	(18,110)
Culture and recreation	138,781	138,781	106,736	(32,045)
Housing and development:				
Conservation	66,518	66,518	66,945	427
Economic development and assistance	53,700	53,700	-	(53,700)
Airport	7,000	7,000	7,982	982

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Budgeted Amounts			Variance with Final Budget - Over
	Original	Final	Actual	(Under)
EXPENDITURES (Continued)				
Capital outlay:				
General government	41,500	41,500	-	(41,500)
Judicial	5,500	5,500	-	(5,500)
Public safety	44,500	44,500	42,264	(2,236)
Public works	77,000	77,000	856,993	779,993
Health and welfare	20,000	20,000	-	(20,000)
Housing and Development	2,300	2,300	-	(2,300)
Total expenditures	5,103,789	5,103,789	5,379,794	276,005
Net change in fund balances	$ (289,551)	$ (289,551)	(451,399)	$ (161,848)
Fund balances, beginning			2,623,529	
Fund balances (deficits), ending			$ 2,172,130	

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

1. Budgetary Policy

The budget is prepared by the Board of Commissioners (the Board) using generally accepted accounting principles. The budget is then adopted by ordinance of the Board, as required by generally accepted accounting principles.

The level of budgetary control (the level at which expenditures may not exceed appropriations) is at the department level with the following provisions:

- The County Clerk may transfer funds from one object or purpose to another within the same department.
- The Board may amend the budget by motion during the fiscal year.

Formal budgetary integration is employed as a management control device during the year for all budgeted funds.

2. Excess of Expenditures Over Appropriations in Individual Funds

During the year ended December 31, 2023, expenditures exceeded appropriations in the following functions:

	Expenditures	Appropriations	Variance
General fund:			
Sheriff	948,191	806,937	(141,254)
Fire	18,133	12,700	(5,433)
Emergency medical services	596,544	497,794	(98,750)
Other protection	264,976	221,493	(43,483)
Conservation	66,945	66,518	(427)
Airport	7,982	7,000	(982)
Capital outlay - Public works	856,993	77,000	(779,993)

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
COMBINING BALANCE SHEET
NONMAJOR GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Special Revenue				Capital Projects	Total Nonmajor
	Multipurpose Grant	Expendable Trust Fund	Sheriff Commissary	Hotel/Motel Tax	SPLOST 2011	Governmental Funds
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,491	$ 29,755	$ 20,337	$ -	$ 242,863	$ 294,446
Total assets	$ 1,491	$ 29,755	$ 20,337	$ -	$ 242,863	$ 294,446
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	$ -	$ -	$ 13,030	$ -	$ -	$ 13,030
Total liabilities	-	-	13,030	-	-	13,030
FUND BALANCES						
Restricted	1,491	29,755	7,307	-	242,863	281,416
Total fund balances	1,491	29,755	7,307	-	242,863	281,416
Total liabilities and fund balances	$ 1,491	$ 29,755	$ 20,337	$ -	$ 242,863	$ 294,446

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - NONMAJOR GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Special Revenue				Capital Projects	Total Nonmajor
	Multipurpose Grant	Expendable Trust Fund	Sheriff Commissary	Hotel/Motel Tax	SPLOST 2011	Governmental Funds
REVENUES						
Other taxes	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 55,472	$ -	$ 55,472
Other income	-	4,381	61,676	-	-	66,057
Total revenues	-	4,381	61,676	55,472	-	121,529
EXPENDITURES						
Current:						
General government	-	-	63,473	-	-	63,473
Public safety	-	-	-	-	2,477	2,477
Culture and recreation	-	5,754	-	-	-	5,754
Housing and development	-	-	-	55,472	-	55,472
Total expenditures	-	5,754	63,473	55,472	2,477	127,176
Net change in fund balances	-	(1,373)	(1,797)	-	(2,477)	(5,647)
Fund balances, beginning	1,491	31,128	9,104	-	245,340	287,063
Fund balances, ending	$ 1,491	$ 29,755	$ 7,307	$ -	$ 242,863	$ 281,416

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
COMBINING STATEMENT OF FIDUCIARY NET POSITION
CUSTODIAL FUNDS
DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Custodial Funds					
	Clerk of Superior Court	Sheriff	Judge of Probate Court	Tax Commissioner	Magistrate Court	Total Fiduciary Funds
ASSETS						
Cash	$ 44,689	$ 32,820	$ 4,470	$ 405,899	$ 15,968	$ 503,846
Taxes receivable (net allowance for uncollectible accounts)	-	-	-	1,832,065	-	1,832,065
Total assets	$ 44,689	$ 32,820	$ 4,470	$ 2,237,964	$ 15,968	$ 2,335,911
NET POSITION						
Net position - held for others	$ 44,689	$ 32,820	$ 4,470	$ 2,237,964	$ 15,968	$ 2,335,911
Total net position	$ 44,689	$ 32,820	$ 4,470	$ 2,237,964	$ 15,968	$ 2,335,911

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
COMBINING STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FIDUCIARY NET POSITION
CUSTODIAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Custodial Funds					
	Clerk of Superior Court	Sheriff	Judge of Probate Court	Tax Commissioner	Magistrate Court	Total Fiduciary Funds
ADDITIONS						
Taxes collected for other agencies	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 2,231,480	$ -	$ 2,231,480
Court fees collected for other agencies	-	-	-	-	92,899	92,899
Court individual cases	110,993	-	65,302	-	-	176,295
Sheriff fees collected	-	119,811	-	-	-	119,811
Total additions	110,993	119,811	65,302	2,231,480	92,899	2,620,485
DEDUCTIONS						
Payments of court fees to other agencies	-	-	67,054	-	66,760	133,814
Payments to others	101,517	112,356	-	-	-	213,873
Payments of taxes to other agencies	-	-	-	1,949,803	-	1,949,803
Total deductions	101,517	112,356	67,054	1,949,803	66,760	2,297,490
Change in net position	9,476	7,455	(1,752)	281,677	26,139	322,995
Net position - beginning	35,213	25,365	6,222	1,956,287	(10,171)	2,012,916
Net position - ending	$ 44,689	$ 32,820	$ 4,470	$ 2,237,964	$ 15,968	$ 2,335,911

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES -
BUDGET AND ACTUAL - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Original and Final Budgeted Amounts	Actual	Variance with Final Budget - Over (Under)
REVENUES			
Georgia Department of Transportation	$ 60,000	$ 51,593	$ (8,407)
Fares and other	2,500	3,013	513
Total revenues	62,500	54,606	(7,894)
EXPENDITURES			
Current:			
Regular employees	81,403	84,939	3,536
Group health insurance	23,002	21,048	(1,954)
Social security contributions	4,551	4,541	(10)
Medicare	1,064	1,062	(2)
Unemployment insurance	822	13	(809)
Substance abuse program	450	365	(85)
Repairs and maintenance	2,000	370	(1,630)
Communications services	2,750	3,343	593
Advertising	375	-	(375)
Insurance	3,000	3,498	498
Travel	750	-	(750)
Education and training	200	-	(200)
Other purchased services	600	780	180
Vehicle operation supplies	2,000	4,115	2,115
Repair parts	800	48	(752)
General supplies and materials	1,200	702	(498)
Water and sewer	300	294	(6)
Electricity	4,000	3,134	(866)
Gasoline / diesel	16,000	22,550	6,550
Capital outlay -			
Machinery and equipment	10,000	-	(10,000)
Total expenditures	155,267	150,802	(4,465)
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditure	$ (92,767)	$ (96,196)	$ (3,429)

Note:
The Department of Transportation is included in the Community Services department of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES -
BUDGET AND ACTUAL - HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA RDC
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	Original and Final Budgeted Amounts	Actual	Variance with Final Budget - Over (Under)
REVENUES			
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC	$ 58,000	$ 88,338	$ 30,338
Program income	3,000	3,254	254
Total revenues	61,000	91,592	30,592
EXPENDITURES			
Current:			
Salaries	41,949	33,154	(8,795)
Payroll taxes	3,678	2,543	(1,135)
Group health insurance	11,501	12,318	817
Repairs and maintenance	2,000	304	(1,696)
Communications services	2,500	2,400	(100)
Travel	1,200	577	(623)
Advertising	100	-	(100)
Education and training	-	155	155
Contract labor	200	-	(200)
Other purchased services	58,000	48,410	(9,590)
Vehicle operation supplies	500	700	200
Repair parts	200	-	(200)
General supplies and materials	2,000	3,460	1,460
Water and sewer	500	310	(190)
Electricity	4,500	4,313	(187)
Gasoline / diesel	750	1,029	279
Food	1,500	-	(1,500)
Books and periodicals	200	-	(200)
Capital outlay -			
Machinery and equipment	1,000	-	(1,000)
Total expenditures	132,278	109,673	(22,605)
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditure	$ (71,278)	$ (18,081)	$ 53,197

Note:
The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (RC) is included in the Community Services department of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance.

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF
SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX PROCEEDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Project Description Per SPLOST Referendum	Original Estimated Cost	Amended Estimated Cost	Expenditures			Estimated Percentage of Completion
			Prior Years	Current Year	Total	
SPLOST 2017:						
Courthouse renovation			$ 39,917	$ -	$ 39,917	
Acquisition of EMS equipment			145,761	-	145,761	
Road, street and bridge purposes			-	-	-	
Renovation and improvement of recreation facilities			36,831	-	36,831	
Acquisition of equipment for the recreation dept			12,228	6,539	18,767	
Acquisition of equipment for fire and rescue services			-	-	-	
Acquisition of equipment for sheriff's dept			63,642	37,000	100,642	
Acquisition of equipment for sanitation			71,037	18,995	90,032	
Subtotal	$ 1,472,000	$ 1,472,000	369,416	62,534	431,950	29.34%
City of Alamo, Georgia	414,000	414,000	393,898	29,499	423,397	102.27%
City of Glenwood, Georgia	414,000	414,000	393,898	29,499	423,397	102.27%
Subtotal	828,000	828,000	787,796	58,998	846,794	
Total	$ 2,300,000	$ 2,300,000	$ 1,157,212	$ 121,532	$ 1,278,744	

(1) In addition to the expenditures shown above, the County has incurred expenditures to provide advance funding for the above project as follows:

Bond issuance costs	$ 46,060	$ -	$ 46,060
Debt service - interest	74,148	1,852	76,000
Debt service - principal	885,000	195,000	1,080,000
Total	$ 1,005,208	$ 196,852	$ 1,202,060

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF
SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX PROCEEDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Project Description Per SPLOST Referendum	Original Estimated Cost	Amended Estimated Cost	Expenditures			Estimated Percentage of Completion
			Prior Years	Current Year	Total	
SPLOST 2011:						
Courthouse renovation (1)			$ 242,942	$ -	$ 242,942	
Jail renovation			715,503	-	715,503	
Construction of new EMS facility			-	-	-	
Road, street and bridge purposes			-	-	-	
Road department vehicles and equipment			155,750	-	155,750	
Recreation facilities improvements			17,150	-	17,150	
Recreation department equipment			62,049	-	62,049	
Fire and rescue services equipment			12,869	2,477	15,346	
Subtotal	$ 1,792,000	$ 1,451,603	1,206,263	2,477	1,208,740	83.27%
City of Alamo, Georgia	504,000	449,371	449,371	-	449,371	100.00%
City of Glenwood, Georgia	504,000	449,371	449,371	-	449,371	100.00%
Subtotal	1,008,000	898,742	898,742	-	898,742	
Total	$ 2,800,000	$ 2,350,345	$ 2,105,005	$ 2,477	$ 2,107,482	

(1) In addition to the expenditures shown above, the County has incurred expenditures to provide advance funding for the above project as follows:

Bond issuance costs	$ 52,000	$ -	$ 52,000
Debt service - interest	94,630	-	94,630
Debt service - principal	835,000	-	835,000
Total	$ 981,630	$ -	$ 981,630

Refer to Independent Auditor's Report.

II. REPORTS REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENTAL AUDITING STANDARDS

49 West Oak Street
McRae Helena, GA 31055
229-868-5614

Milton CPA Services, LLC

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS*

Wheeler County Board of Commissioners
Wheeler County, Georgia
Alamo, Georgia 30411

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, the discretely presented component unit and the aggregate remaining fund information of Wheeler County, Georgia, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise Wheeler County, Georgia's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated May 31, 2024.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered Wheeler County, Georgia 's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Wheeler County, Georgia's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Wheeler County, Georgia's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified. We did identify certain deficiencies in internal control, described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses as items 2023-1 and 2023-2 that we consider to be significant deficiencies.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Wheeler County, Georgia's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Wheeler County, Georgia's Response to Findings

Wheeler County, Georgia's responses to the findings identified in our audit is described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses. Wheeler County, Georgia's responses were not subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Milton CPA Services, LLC

McRae Helena, Georgia

May 31, 2024

WHEELER COUNTY, GEORGIA
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Section I – Summary of Auditor's Results

Financial Statements:

Type of report issued on the financial statements -	Unmodified
Internal control over financial reporting:	
Material weakness(es) identified?	No
Significant deficiencies identified not considered to be material weaknesses?	Yes
Noncompliance material to the financial statements noted?	No

Section II – Financial Statement Findings:

The following conditions were disclosed for the year ended December 31, 2023:

Audit Finding

2023-1 Lack of segregation of duties

The audit fieldwork disclosed that the County does not have adequate segregation of duties. It was noted that many of the day to day activities are performed by the same employees.

This overlapping of duties presents a situation where unauthorized use of assets could occur and not be detected on a timely basis.

We recommend management continually exercise alert supervision of employees in order to protect the assets of the County

Management's Response:

We realize that with limited personnel adequate segregation of duties is not possible. Therefore, to mitigate this we exercise alert supervision over all employees.

2023-2 Expenditures over appropriations

The audit fieldwork disclosed that the County over-expended funds in the sheriff, fire, emergency medical services, other protection, conservation, airport departments and capital outlay. The County lacks budgetary controls to ensure that actual expenditures do not exceed budgeted expenditures.

It is recommended that the County review a budget versus actual on a monthly basis to prevent expenditures in excess of budgeted amounts.

Management's Response:

The County recognizes that maintaining appropriate budgetary controls on its expenditures is important in keeping costs below approved amounts and serves as a management tool in evaluating results of operations. In our efforts to continuously improve and to comply with the highest form of governmental accounting and financial reporting we have implemented a formal review process to compare actual to budgeted amounts on a monthly basis. Expenditures which will cause the County to go over budget will require prior approval of the County Commissioners and/or an amended budget will be prepared.