



**GEORGIA FIRST
AMENDMENT
FOUNDATION**
your right to know

October 9, 2008

Commissioner Johnny Kistler, Chair
Heard County Board of Assessors
P.O. Box 476
Franklin, Georgia 30217

Dear Chairman Kistler:

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. We are an organization that seeks to advance the cause of open government and monitors freedom of information issues throughout this state.

It has been brought to our attention that the Heard County Board of Assessors may be providing inadequate notice of its public meetings, and also may be failing to make the minutes of its public meetings available to the public. As you know, a public agency is required to provide notice of its meetings, as well as record minutes and make them available to the public. See O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1(d), (e)(2). We are concerned that the activities of the Heard County Board of Commissioners are contrary to public policy and urge you to review O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq.* which set forth the requirements for properly held public meetings and the release of public records.

To that end, I have enclosed a copy of our publication, *Georgia's Sunshine Laws: A Citizen's Guide to Open Government*, which discusses both the open records and meetings acts as well as other open government issues pertinent to your work. Similarly, this foundation would be pleased to visit with you and conduct a workshop on the mechanics of both of the open government laws.

We would appreciate an explanation of what will be done to remedy these actions that go against the interests of the public. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hollie Manheimer
Executive Director

Enclosure

Cc: GFAP Board

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"Because public men and women are amenable 'at all times' to the people, they must conduct the public's business out in the open."
The late Charles L. Weltner Sr., Chief Justice, Georgia Supreme Court

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