

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF  
GEORGIA, VALDOSTA DIVISION

Frances Hood and Matthew A. Williams v. Mayor Ronelle Searcy

Hood · No. 7:25-cv-184-WLS · Decided March 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia provides pro se plaintiffs Frances Hood and Matthew A. Williams notice and an opportunity to respond to Defendants’ motion to dismiss. The Court permits each plaintiff to file an individual brief of no more than twenty pages within twenty-one days, or by March 31, 2026, and warns that failure to respond may result in dismissal without further notice.

CASE DETAILS

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COURT                 | United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Valdosta Division                                                                                                                                                               |
| WRITING FOR THE COURT | W. Louis Sands, Sr. Judge                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| JURISDICTION          | United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Valdosta Division                                                                                                                                                               |
| DECIDED               | March 10, 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| DOCKET                | 7:25-cv-184-WLS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| DISPOSITION           | other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| PROCEDURAL POSTURE    | The district court issued an order notifying pro se plaintiffs of the pending motion to dismiss and providing them an opportunity to respond before the court rules on the motion.                                                               |
| STANDARD OF REVIEW    | For purposes of a motion to dismiss, the court accepts as true the factual allegations in the complaint and requires sufficient factual allegations to raise a reasonable expectation that discovery will reveal evidence supporting the claims. |
| PRECEDENTIAL VALUE    | Nonprecedential interlocutory procedural order                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

TOPICS

[motions to dismiss](#)

[standing](#)

[pleadings](#)

[subject matter jurisdiction](#)

[civil procedure](#)

PRACTICE AREAS

**QUESTIONS PRESENTED**

1. Whether pro se plaintiffs should be given an opportunity to respond to the pending motion to dismiss before the court rules on it.
2. What pleading standard governs the court's consideration of the motion to dismiss.
3. Whether the motion seeks dismissal of Matthew A. Williams for lack of standing under Rule 12(b)(1) and dismissal for failure to state a claim under Rule 12(b)(6).

**HOLDINGS**

1. The court permitted each pro se plaintiff to file an individual brief opposing the motion to dismiss within twenty-one days, after which the court would consider the motion and any opposition before issuing a ruling.
2. In considering the motion to dismiss, the court accepts as true the facts alleged in the complaint, but the complaint must contain factual allegations raising a reasonable expectation that discovery will reveal evidence supporting the claims.

**KEY QUOTATIONS**

*“As Plaintiffs are proceeding pro se, the Court shall permit them an opportunity to file a Response to the Motion to Dismiss, if they so desire, within twenty-one (21) days of this Order or no later than Tuesday, March 31, 2026.”*

*“Plaintiffs are also noticed that since they only represent themselves individually as pro se Plaintiffs, they must file their individual response, not a single response on behalf of both.”*

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

Frances Hood and Matthew A. Williams, proceeding pro se, filed a First Amended Complaint against Mayor Ronelle Searcy. Defendants moved to dismiss under Rules 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6), including an argument that Williams lacks standing. The court had not yet resolved the motion and issued this order to provide the pro se plaintiffs notice and an opportunity to respond.

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Plaintiffs filed a First Amended Complaint on February 18, 2026. Defendants refiled a motion to dismiss under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6) on March 4, 2026. The court directed each pro se plaintiff to file an individual response within twenty-one days and stated that it would decide the motion after considering the motion and any opposition.

**DISPOSITION**

other

## CASES CITED

- Griffith v. Wainwright, 772 F.2d 822 (11th Cir. 1985) (per curiam)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 556 (2007)
- Wilchombe v. TeeVee Toons, Inc., 555 F.3d 949, 959 (11th Cir. 2009)

## OPINION

HOOD

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

VALDOSTA DIVISION

FRANCES HOOD and : MATTHEW A. WILLIAMS, : Plaintiffs, : : CASE NO: v. : 7:25-cv-184–  
WLS

MAYOR RONELLE SEARCY, ,

Defendants. \_\_\_\_\_

ORDER

On February 18, 2026, Plaintiffs Frances Hood and Matthew A. Williams, proceeding pro se in this action, filed a First Amended Complaint. On March 4, 2026, Defendants refiled their Motion to Dismiss pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6) with Incorporated Memorandum of Law (Doc. 32) (“Motion to Dismiss”). The Court typically provides notice to pro se plaintiffs about how they may respond to a motion to dismiss. Hence, in an effort to ensure and to afford Plaintiffs adequate notice regarding the Motion to Dismiss, the Court issues the instant Order. See generally Griffith v. Wainwright, 772 F.2d 822 (11th Cir. 1985) (per curiam). When considering a motion to dismiss, the Court accepts as true all facts set forth in a plaintiff’s complaint. Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 556 (2007); Wilchombe v. TeeVee Toons, Inc., 555 F.3d 949, 959 (11th Cir. 2009). Although the complaint must contain factual allegations that “raise a reasonable expectation that discovery will reveal evidence of” the plaintiff’s claims, Twombly, 550 U.S. at 556, Rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that “[i]f the plaintiff fails to prosecute or to comply with [the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure] or a court order, a defendant may move to dismiss the action or any claim against it. Unless the dismissal order states otherwise, a dismissal under this subdivision . . . operates as an adjudication on the merits.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b). In addition to seeking relief under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) for failure to state a claim, the Motion to Dismiss seeks to dismiss Plaintiff Matthew A Williams as a Plaintiff in this case for lack of standing under Rule 12(b)(1). Under the procedures and policies of this Court, motions to dismiss are normally decided on briefs. Plaintiffs may submit their arguments to this Court by filing individual briefs, not exceeding twenty pages each, in opposition to the Motion to Dismiss. M.D. Ga. L.R. 7.4. Furthermore, the Court’s resolution of a motion to dismiss could result in granting judgment against Plaintiff(s) and there would be no trial or further

proceedings. As Plaintiffs are proceeding pro se, the Court shall permit them an opportunity to file a Response to the Motion to Dismiss, if they so desire, within twenty-one (21) days of this Order or no later than Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Thereafter, the Court will consider Defendants' Motion to Dismiss and any opposition to the same filed by Plaintiffs and issue its ruling. Plaintiffs are noticed that if Defendants' Motion to Dismiss is granted, Plaintiffs' Complaint may be dismissed without further notice or proceeding. Plaintiffs are further noticed that upon a timely written motion for a reasonable time to obtain counsel, the Court will consider the same before addressing the Motion to Dismiss. Otherwise, Plaintiffs are entirely responsible for filing a timely response to the Motion to Dismiss as set out herein. Plaintiffs are also noticed that since they only represent themselves individually as pro se Plaintiffs, they must file their individual response, not a single response on behalf of both. SO ORDERED, this 10th day of March 2026. /s/ W. Louis Sands

W. LOUIS SANDS, SR. JUDGE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT