JONESBORO — Clayton County commission Vice-Chairman Wole Ralph and Commissioners Sonna Singleton and Gail Hambrick have been ordered to testify before a special purpose grand jury — possibly as early as today, according to county officials.

Commission Chairman Eldrin Bell said he saw Dennis Baker, the chief administrator in the Clayton County District Attorney’s office, hand a subpoena to Hambrick as commissioners were preparing to enter an executive session Tuesday night. Bell said he had no doubt about what Baker was handing Hambrick. “He said, ‘It’s a subpoena,’” Bell told Clayton News Daily. The chairman said he could not clearly remember whether he saw Baker hand Singleton a subpoena as well, and he did not see one handed to Ralph. District Attorney Tracy Graham Lawson confirmed to the newspaper all three were indeed given subpoenas, however. Lawson declined to say whether the trio was summoned to testify about a possible investigation into their actions, however.

Interim County Attorney Jack Hancock announced during an open meeting of the commission the reason for the executive session was to discuss “a real estate matter, personnel matter and a litigation matter.”

That was before the commissioners were handed the subpoenas, however. Bell said he has testified before the special grand jury already but “my attorney was told I was not the target of the investigation.” He said neither he nor Commissioner Michael Edmondson was subpoenaed this week.

The special purpose grand jury has been looking into corruption in the county for more than a year, but it does not have the authority to issue indictments. The grand jury’s previous investigations, however, have led to regular grand juries indicting several officials, including former Sheriff Victor Hill and former Morrow City Councilman John Lampl.

Bell said the subpoenas issued to Singleton, Ralph and Hambrick are a “serious” matter for the commission because of the nature of the special purpose grand jury.

“This grand jury was created by a judge but its charge has not been made publicly known, so the public and the commission is left to draw its own conclusions,” said Bell.