



## APPROVED MINUTES

January 13, 2026

Cochran City Council

Regular Called Meeting 6:00 PM

*City Auditorium, 102 N Second Street, Cochran, GA 31014*

### City Council

### City Staff

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Carla D Coley, Mayor                                   | Richard Newbern, City Manager     |
| Trecia Gardner Council Member<br>(District 1, Post 1)  | Tiffany Lampp, Interim City Clerk |
| Gary Ates, Council Member<br>(District 1, Post 2)      | Jim Elliott, City Attorney        |
| Rufus Veal, Council Member<br>(District 2 Post 1)      |                                   |
| Lonnie Tedders, Council Member<br>(District 2, Post 2) |                                   |
| Dianne Lester Council Member<br>(District 3, Post 1)   |                                   |
| Shane Savant, Council Member<br>(District 3, Post 2)   |                                   |

- I. Call to Order by Interim City Clerk @ 6:00 pm
- II. Invocation by Councilman Gary Ates
- III. Pledge of Allegiance by Councilman Shane Savant
- IV. Attendance- All in attendance creating a quorum.
- V. Swearing in of Mayor and Council by the Interim City Clerk
- VI. Pass of the gavel to New Mayor Carla D. Coley

#### IV. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion** to approve the agenda as presented by Councilman Ates Second by Councilman Tedders.
  - Motion made and seconded.
  - **Vote:** Unanimous
  - **Result:** Motion carried.

#### V. Public Comments

A representative provided updates on upcoming Chamber and community events, including Lunch and Learns, Bingo, Business After Hours, Dueling Pianos benefiting a scholarship fund, Caffeinated Connections, and future Second Saturday events.

#### VI. Recognitions and Remarks

Council and the Mayor recognized several historic milestones, including:

- The swearing-in of the City of Cochran's first female mayor.
- The first time three women are serving simultaneously on City Council.
- Recognition of council diversity and optimism for the new council term.

- Presentation of the historic City of Cochran flag, with explanation of its symbols representing Native history, the railroad, agriculture, and Middle Georgia College.

## **VII. Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem**

- **Motion** to appoint a Mayor Pro Tem for 2026.
  - Motion made to appoint Shane Savant by Councilman Gary Ates and seconded by Councilman Lonnie Tedders.
  - **Vote:** Unanimous
  - **Result:** Motion carried.

## **VIII. Emergency Management Reimbursements**

Council accepted two reimbursement checks totaling \$46,135,89 related to Hurricane Helene emergency protective measures and debris removal from Matt Kelley EMA Director.

## **IX. FY 2024–2025 Audit Presentation**

The City's CPA Nicholas Coley presented the FY 2024–2025 audit, confirming:

- Audit completed and submitted to the State on time.
- An unmodified (clean) audit opinion.
- Stable general fund position, with fluctuations explained by grant accounting and ARPA impacts.
- Enterprise funds reported positive net positions.
- Only audit comment was a standard segregation-of-duties note common to small cities.

## **X. Liquor License Extensions**

Council approved two separate six-month extensions for remaining liquor licenses held by Bobby Patel and A.J. Patel, extending through July 31.

- Motion made by Councilmember Gary Ates Seconded by Councilman Tedders. Councilmember Savant voted against both extensions.
- **Result:** Motions carried. 5-1 vote.

## **XI. Building Inspection Services**

- **Motion** to terminate the interlocal agreement with the county for building inspection services.
- **Motion** to approve a contract and fee schedule with **Falcon Design**, allowing the City to retain **80% of permit fees**.
  - Motions made by Councilman Tedders seconded by Councilman Gary Ates.
  - **Result:** Motions carried. Unanimous.

## **XII. Council Committees and Ethics Board**

Council discussed committee assignments; no vote required. Council was advised that ethics board appointments would be required at the February meeting.

## **XIII. Peyton Williams Learning Center**

Council discussed the proposal to designate the Peyton Williams Learning Center as a community resource center overseen by Cochran Helps.

- **Motion** to table the item to the next meeting for further review and a full business plan by Councilman Gary Ates Seconded by Councilwoman Lester.
  - **Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous

#### **XIV. Grant Applications**

##### **CHIP Grant**

- **Motion** to approve filing a 2026 CHIP application for \$500,000 with a \$30,000 match by Councilman Gary Ates 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Tedders
  - **Result:** Motion carried 5-1 vote
  - Ates, Savant, Tedders, Gardner, and Lester voted in favor. Councilman Veal oppose.

##### **CDBG Grant**

Council discussed housing vs. water/sewer vs. multi-activity options.

- **Motion** to pursue a CDBG application focused on water and sewer infrastructure by Councilman Shane Savant seconded by Councilman Rufus Veal.
  - Vote resulted in a tie, broken by the mayor voting in favor of pursuing CDBG Application focused on sewer infrastructure.
  - **Result:** Motion carried. Savant, Lester and Veal (YES) Tedders, Ates, and Gardner (NO)

#### **XV. 2026 Budget Calendar**

- **Motion** to approve the 2026 budget calendar by Councilman Lonnie Tedders Seconded by Councilman Gary Ates.
  - **Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous.

#### **XVI. Public Facilities Authority**

Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing pursuit of legislation to create a Public Facilities Authority, noting it provides a financing tool but does not obligate the City to issue debt by Councilman Lonnie Tedders seconded by Councilman Rufus Veal.

- **Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous

#### **XVII. Fee Schedule Update**

Motion to approve updates to the city fee schedule, including

- \$25 after-hours utility reconnection fee
- \$25 zoning verification letter fee
- \$200 double-wide mobile home fee

**Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous

by Councilman Lonnie Tedders Seconded by Councilman Shane Savant.

#### **XIX. Department Reports**

- City Manager provided updates on:
  - Comprehensive Plan joint meeting
  - Peacock Street drainage project
  - Willie Basby Park upgrades
- Police Chief presented monthly report and answered questions regarding animal control operations.
- Finance Clerk presented the financial report; council discussed investing idle funds and staff agreed to review options.

## XX. Council Comments

Councilmembers offered congratulatory remarks, emphasized collaboration, fiscal responsibility, and requested earlier distribution of meeting packets to improve preparation and reduce tabling of items.

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## XXI. Executive Session

- Motion to enter executive session for property acquisition, personnel matters, and potential litigation by Councilman Lonnie Tedders seconded by Councilman Shane Savant.
  - Motion made and seconded.
  - **Result:** Motion carried.

## Return to Open Session

- **Motion** to return to open session by Councilman Gary Ates seconded by Councilman Lonnie Tedders
  - **Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous

## Personnel Action

Council clarified that a prior personnel vote from a called meeting had been vetoed by the former mayor and was properly before Council again.

- **Motion:** To terminate City Clerk Candace Summerall's administrative leave and restore her to regular duties effective January 20 by Councilman Lonnie Tedders seconded by Councilman Shane Savant.
  - **Vote:** Majority in favor. Tedders, Savant, Ates, & Gardner (YES) Veal and Lester (NO)
  - **Result:** Motion carried.

## XXII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Interim City Clerk

Tiffany Fowler

