



**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Cochran City Council**  
**Saturday, June 29, 2024**  
**Special Called Meeting @ 8:30AM**

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Alderman Hall, 1100 2nd St SE, Cochran, GA 31014

**City Council**

**City Staff**

Billy Yeomans, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Keith Anderson, Council Member <i>(District 1, Post 1)</i>	Candace Summerall, City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member <i>(District 1, Post 2)</i>	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Carla Coley, Council Member <i>(District 2 Post 1)</i>	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member <i>(District 2, Post 2)</i>	
Andrew Lemmon, Council Member <i>(District 3, Post 1)</i>	
Shane Savant, Council Member <i>(District 3, Post 2)</i>	

- I. Call to Order by the Mayor**
  - a. Mayor Billy Yeomans called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM
- II. Invocation**
  - a. Led by Council member Keith Anderson
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
  - a. Led by Council Member Shane Savant

#### **IV. Attendance**

- a. Mayor Billy Yeomans, Councilmember Keith Anderson, Councilmember Gary Ates, Councilmember Carla Coley, Councilmember Andrew Lemmon, Councilmember Shane Savant, Councilmember Lonnie Tedders
- b. Staff Present: Richard Newbern, City Manager, Candace Summerall, City Clerk, Jim Elliott, City Attorney

#### **V. Adopt Agenda/Minutes**

- a. The agenda for the special called meeting was adopted as presented.

#### **VI. Agenda Items**

- a. Discussion and Consideration of FY 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance

Mayor Yeomans explained he had vetoed the previously approved budget on June 14, 2024 to allow for further discussion of pay equity for the Fire Department, Administration, and Public Works. He advocated for addressing all departments now rather than waiting until next year.

City Manager Richard Newbern presented several budget options:

1. Adopt the originally proposed balanced budget with 3.5% cost of living increase and new employee benefits (\$99,277 total cost).
2. Provide 11.06% increase to Fire Department only (\$41,100 additional cost).
3. Provide 5.53% increase to Fire, Public Works, and Administration (\$74,200 additional cost).
4. Provide 11.06% increase to Fire, Public Works, and Administration (\$148,401 additional cost).

Councilmember Savant expressed concern about the financial impact of large across-the-board increases, noting the city had considered a millage rate increase last year. He advocated for a phased approach.

Councilmember Ates emphasized treating all departments equally and making decisions together as a council. He supported the 5.53% option based on discussions with the City Manager.

Councilmember Coley noted the police department had received an 11.06% increase in February 2022 to remain competitive with the county. She supported addressing the fire department now and other departments next year as previously discussed.

Councilmember Anderson stressed the importance of following through on commitments and suggested revisiting increases next year if the 5.53% option was chosen.

Councilmember Savant made a motion to increase the budget to \$4,576,590, providing an 11.06% increase for the Fire Department only, with assurance to re-evaluate other departments next year. Councilmember Coley seconded. The motion failed 2-4.

Councilmember Ates then made a motion to provide a 5.53% increase to Public Works, Fire Department, and Administration, with a commitment to re-evaluate all departments next year for potential additional increases. Councilmember Lemmon seconded.

The motion passed 4-2 with the following roll call vote:

Anderson - Yes

Ates - Yes

Coley - No

Lemmon - Yes

Savant - No

Tedders - Yes

#### IV. Adjournment

Mayor Yeomans thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:45 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

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Candace Summerall, City Clerk