



**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**December 10, 2024**  
**Cochran City Council**  
**Regular Session @ 7:00 PM**

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

**City Council**

**City Staff**

Billy Yeomans, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
VACANT <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>	
VACANT <i>(District 3, Post 1)</i>	
Shane Savant, Council Member <i>(District 3, Post 2)</i>	

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Billy Yeomans called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. INVOCATION**

Led by council Member Gary Ates

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by City Clerk Candace Summerall

**IV. ATTENDANCE**

Mayor confirmed quorum present with four council members in attendance.

**V. ADOPT AGENDA/MINUTES**

A. Minutes

Motion by Council Member Ates to approve the November 12, 2024 regular session minutes with correction regarding references to "Old Arts Alliance" and "City Auditorium" of CDBG grant application by Council Member Coley. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Agenda

Motion by Council Member Tedders to approve the agenda as provided. Second by Council Member Ates. Motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. Presentation to the City by Mayor Yeomans**

Mayor Yeomans, as the city's director on the Mid-State Energy Board, presented City Manager Newbern with a dividend check from Mid-State Energy Organization for \$90,150.

### **2. Public Hearing - Conditional Use Application**

Public hearing opened at 7:07 PM regarding application from Ms. Sherrie Williams to operate an in-house Home Care facility at 211 Ash Street. The property is zoned R-3 residential, and a rooming/boarding house is allowed as a conditional use per Section 4.1, page 45 of the Cochran Zoning Ordinance.

Planning Commission met December 5th and voted 5-0 to approve the application with condition that if licensed personal care home ceased to exist, owner would need conditional use re-approval to continue as private rooming house.

No public comments received. Public hearing closed at 7:17 PM.

Motion by Council Member Ates. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

### **3. 2025 City Council Retreat**

Extended discussion held regarding:

- Dates: Set for February 6-7, 2025
- Location: City of Cochran
- Facilitator: Original facilitator Dr. Carrie Hamilton unavailable; staff directed to secure alternate facilitator
- Council approved retreat agenda with notation that Council Member Savant would submit additional item

Motion by Council Member Savant to approve retreat agenda. Second by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

### **4. General Fund Budget Amendment**

City Manager presented request for budget amendments totaling \$116,236.81 for clerk administration, including adjustments for:

- Overtime related to tax collection and training
- Payroll tax expenses
- Professional services
- ARPA expenses

Motion to table by Council Member Savant. Second by Council Member Coley. Motion tied 2-2, with Mayor Yeomans voting against tabling.

Motion by Council Member Ates to approve budget amendment. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried 3-2 with Mayor Yeomans breaking tie. Council Members Savant and Coley opposed.

#### **5. City Park Construction Bid**

Discussion held regarding revised bid from ICB Construction Inc. for \$1,409,672.12 for construction of 5.2-acre city park on North Ash Street. Key points included:

- Within city's \$1,447,000 park budget
- Phase 1 construction with 330-day contract period
- Council discussion of safety features including lighting and cameras
- Concerns regarding restroom facilities and accessibility features

Motion by Council Member Savant to award bid to ICB Construction. Second by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **6. Animal Control Center Addition**

Consideration of two bids:

- Brown Construction: \$65,700
- BH Gregory LLC: \$104,156.96

Discussion included current facility capacity (13 animals) and addition providing space for 7 more animals to meet state requirements.

Motion by Council Member Savant to accept Brown Construction bid of \$65,700. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **7. FEMA AFG Fire Grant Application**

Chief Brock Wilcher presented request to reapply for FEMA AFG grant for mini-pumper purchase. City's cost would be \$30,200 total (\$19,500 cash match plus \$11,700 grant writing fee if successful).

Motion by Council Member Tedders. Second by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **8. Scrap Tire Grant Application**

Discussion of early application for 2025 EPD scrap tire assistance grant to support annual tire amnesty week during cleanup Cochran event in April.

Motion by Council Member Coley. Second by Council Member Savant. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **9. GDOT LMIG Grant Application**

Willie Farrow presented LMIG grant application for 2025 street improvements.

Motion by Council Member Ates to approve filing of LMIG grant application. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

## **VII. CITY MANAGER DISCUSSION/ITEMS/UPDATES**

**City Manager Newbern** provided updates on:

- Mac Thompson Road paving project starting December 16
- Very Cochran Christmas event December 14
- Falcon Design progress on Lewis and Peacock Street
- CDBG administrative RFP process
- City audit completion target of December 31
- House Bill 581 implementation planning
- Introduction of new administrative assistant Lisa Eisele

**City Clerk Summerall** thanked the community, participants, and parade goers, especially fellow department heads, for a successful Christmas parade. She also reminded Mayor and Council of her open-door policy for any questions they may have.

**City Attorney Elliott** had no updates but indicated he would provide requested information about council districts as soon as received.

## **VIII. COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ITEMS**

**Council Member Tedders** (District 2) thanked the citizens of District 2 and Cochran for their service to the city council. He congratulated all city departments for a successful year, noting:

- Administration's streamlining of City Hall operations
- Public Works' vital role in maintaining safe streets, providing essential utilities, and ensuring timely trash collection
- Police and Fire Departments' tireless efforts and long hours keeping the community safe, contributing to reduced insurance rates He concluded by expressing appreciation for all individuals who contribute to making Cochran a wonderful place to call home.

**Council Member Savant** (District 3) reflected on his first full year in office, noting:

- His district's request for stronger focus on budget and city functions
- Progress made in streamlining operations
- Commitment to understanding city operations and making informed decisions

- Appreciation for city employees and constituents He expressed continued dedication to improving Cochran and the lives of its citizens.

**Council Member Coley (District 2):**

- Emphasized the importance of council members having access to information needed for informed decisions
- Thanked staff for successful Christmas parade organization
- Shared holiday message about community connection and supporting others during the season

**Council Member Ates (District 1)** had no formal comments.

**Mayor Yeomans** provided closing remarks:

- Reminded citizens about county tire amnesty program running December 10-21
- Emphasized holiday safety and checking on neighbors
- Commended the Christmas parade's success while noting concerns about safety during candy distribution
- Acknowledged widespread illness in the community
- Thanked city employees for their service
- Expressed appreciation for council members' work despite occasional disagreements
- Reminded all to remember the reason for the Christmas season

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

1. Next Work Session -- Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
2. Next Regular Council Meeting - Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Melissa Barker, Chamber of Commerce
  - Updated council on Chamber Elf "Chandler" visiting city locations
  - Announced recent grand opening of Seven Star Package Store
  - Promoted upcoming Dueling Pianos event on January 25th
  - Discussed Monday bingo night combined with toy drive
  - Provided information about downtown business window decorating contest

- Shared details about upcoming Very Cochran Christmas event

2. Vanessa Sanders

- Discussed concerns about recycling operations at the dump
- Proposed community trash cleanup initiative
- Suggested creation of Cochran Community Christmas Angel Tree program

3. Mike Stoy

- Thanked council for approving city park
- Suggested infrastructure improvements be considered during retreat planning
- Discussed need for improved community meeting facilities
- Recommended review of city entrances and code enforcement
- Encouraged council to support ongoing community development initiatives

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No matters requiring executive session.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Yeomans adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

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**Candace Summerall, City Clerk**