



DRAFT MINUTES
February 11, 2025
Cochran City Council
Regular Session @ 7:00 PM

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 by the Mayor 7PM

II. Invocation led by Carla Coley

III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Shane Savant

IV. Attendance City Attorney not in attendance. Mayor Billy Yeomans confirmed all council members were in attendance and formed a quorum.

V. Adopt Agenda/Minutes

1. Approve Minutes from Jan 14, 2025, Regular Council Meeting. The Council reviewed the minutes from the January 14, 2025 regular meeting. Following a motion by Council Member Gary Ates and second by Council Member Savant, the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Approve Agenda for February 11, 2025, Regular Council Meeting. Regarding the evening's agenda, Council Member Savant moved to remove Item #2 concerning opting out of GA HB 581. Following a motion by Council Member Gary Ates Council Member Savant seconded the motion, and the modified agenda was approved unanimously.

VI. Agenda Items

1. Proclamation of February as Black History Month

Mayor Yeomans delivered a proclamation declaring February 2025 as Black History Month in the City of Cochran. The proclamation acknowledged the 2025 theme "African-Americans in Labor" and recognized the significant contributions of African-Americans to Cochran and Georgia's growth and prosperity. The proclamation encouraged citizens to participate in programs and activities celebrating these contributions to the community, state, and nation.

2. Health Insurance Benefits Renewal

City Manager Newbern presented the health insurance renewal proposal negotiated by Mike Sanford of Choice Insurance with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. The renewal includes a 10% premium increase with a \$15,000 credit, raising the annual cost from \$342,719.28 to \$375,875.76, an increase of \$33,156.48. The new rate will take effect March 1, 2025.

During discussion, Council Member Savant addressed future budget considerations and suggested exploring the possibility of employee premium sharing, noting that a \$15 per-pay-period employee contribution could save the city approximately \$11,000-12,000 annually. Council Member Ates moved to approve the resolution, with Council Member Savant seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Industrial Development Authority Grant Resolution

The Council considered a resolution of endorsement for the IDA's \$2 million application to the One Georgia Fund for water and sewer improvements to the industrial park. The proposal specifies that the IDA will provide the required \$200,000 (10%) match, while the city will cover Falcon Design consultant expenses. Council Member Savant moved to approve the resolution, with Council Member Coley seconding. The motion passed unanimously. The application deadline is March 28, 2025.

4. Downtown Development Authority Grant Resolution

Ken Land, DDA Director, presented information about the DDA's application for a \$50,000 T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program. He confirmed that no matching funds would be required. Council Member Ates moved to approve the resolution of endorsement, with Council Member Coley seconding. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Package Sales Ordinance Amendment

The Council reviewed proposed changes to distilled spirits sales hours, extending weekday hours (Monday through Thursday) from 9 AM - 9 PM to 9 AM - 10 PM, while maintaining Friday and Saturday hours of 9 AM - 11 PM. Council Member Ates moved to approve the amendment, with Council Member Tedders providing the second. A roll call vote was

conducted with all members voting in favor: Council Members Ates, Coley, Tedders, and Savant each voted yes, resulting in unanimous approval.

6. Council Meeting Schedule Changes

The Council announced changes to the meeting schedule beginning March 2025. Work sessions will move to the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM, while regular sessions will remain on the second Tuesday but shift to 6:00 PM. Additionally, public comments will be moved to the beginning of meetings, and the Planning Commission will meet on the first Monday of each month.

VII. City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

City Manager Newbern provided several updates on ongoing projects and initiatives. He reported that a department head meeting is scheduled for February 17, and budget planning for FY25-26 is underway with a general fund of \$4.5M. He announced that the city will apply for a cyber security grant and noted the upcoming Chamber banquet on March 22.

Newbern also reported that funding has been released for Willie Basby Park improvements, and progress continues on the drainage project for Peacock and Lewis streets. He updated the Council on the \$1.4M North Ash Street city park project and ongoing downtown infrastructure upgrades.

VIII. Council Discussion/Items

During council comments, Council Member Ates announced a District 1 meeting scheduled for Thursday at 7:00 PM and extended an invitation to District 1 candidates.

Council Member Coley expressed appreciation for the recent retreat's organization and outcomes.

Council Member Tedders had no comments.

Council Member Savant provided election information, including early voting dates beginning February 24th and announced an upcoming meet-the-candidates event. He emphasized the importance of voter participation and shared key election dates, including the February 17th registration deadline and March 7th absentee ballot deadline.

Mayor Yeomans concluded with comments emphasizing the importance of voting in Districts 1 and 3, sharing his philosophy on civic participation. He expressed satisfaction with the recent retreat and commented on the community's positive attributes, including the beauty of recent snowfall in Cochran.

IX. Announcement of Upcoming Meetings and Events

1. Next Work Session - Thursday March 6, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
2. Next Regular Council Meeting - Tuesday, March 11, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
3. Special Election For District 1 and District 3- Tuesday March 18th, 2025 7AM-7PM

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Candace Summerall

City Clerk