



DRAFT Minutes

September 9, 2025

Cochran City Council

Regular Session @ 6:00 PM

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

City Council

City Staff

Billy Yeomans, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Trecia Gardner (District 1, Post 1)	Candace Summerall, City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member (District 1, Post 2)	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Carla Coley, Council Member (District 2 Post 1)	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member (District 2, Post 2)	
Dianne Lester (District 3, Post 1)	
Shane Savant, Council Member (District 3, Post 2)	

I. Call to Order by the Mayor

Mayor Billy Yeomans called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. Invocation

Invocation was led by Commissioner Mike Davis

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of allegiance was led by Al Gilbert

IV. Attendance

Present: Mayor Billy Yeomans, Council Members Gary Ates, Carla Coley, Trecia Gardner, Dianne Lester, Lonnie Tedders, Shane Savant

Absent: None

Records show that all seven members of council are present, quorum met.

V. Adopt Agenda/Minutes

1. Approve Minutes from August 12, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

Motion: Made by Council Member Ates **Second:** By Council Member Tedders **Vote:** Unanimous approval

2. Approve Agenda for September 9, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

Agenda Modifications:

Council Member Shane Savant requested the removal of items 5 and 6 from the agenda, citing concerns about proceeding with annexation matters without complete documentation. Council Member Savant indicated that the Council had been addressing these matters for several months, with new information being provided on meeting days that prevented full understanding of the proposals. He stated that Council members were not comfortable voting on matters they did not fully understand or where information had been incomplete.

Council Member Savant specified that until the City can provide comprehensive documentation including street maps, property maps, deeds, and plats, the Council should postpone consideration of annexation proposals. He recommended removing these items not only from the current agenda but from active consideration until complete documentation is available.

Motion: Council Member Carla Coley moved to remove items 5 and 6 from the agenda **Second:** Council Member Tedders **Vote:** Unanimous approval to remove items 5 and 6

Mayor Yeomans addressed the audience and apologized for the confusion and delays regarding the seventeen annexation items, acknowledging that residents should not have experienced the procedural difficulties that had occurred.

VI. Public Comments

Brian Lucas - 122 W Dykes St Street

Brian Lucas invited the City Council and community to the grand opening of Lucas Funeral Home at 122 W Dykes St. (formerly Fisher Funeral Home location). The grand opening is scheduled for Tuesday, September 23rd from 5:00 to 6:30 PM as a drop-in event for anyone wanting to see the facilities and meet the staff. Mr. Lucas noted they have been fully operational since February and are working to get everything back to normal operations.

VII. Agenda Items

1. Presentation by Gary McCoy, President of the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP)

Gary McCoy, President of the Georgia Association of Water Professionals, presented the City of Cochran with a Gold Award for compliance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act for 2024. The award recognizes 365 days without permit violations despite conducting approximately 90,000 annual water quality tests. Mr. McCoy explained that receiving the gold award for five consecutive years qualifies the city for platinum status, and noted this is the city's second consecutive gold award.

Mr. McCoy recognized City Manager Richard Newbern and Class One Operator Brad Holtsinger for their contributions to achieving this award. He encouraged the city to maintain their excellent standards to achieve platinum certification.

2. Public Hearing and consideration of a Planning Commission recommendation of a City initiated rezoning of 110 Mendel Lane and 112 Mendel Lane from DC-Commercial to M-1 Light Industrial

Public Hearing Called to Order: 6:21 PM

Mayor Yeomans provided background information: The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 2nd and voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the rezoning. Both 0.45-acre parcels owners support the rezoning. The property at 110 Mendel Lane is proposed as the location for Cu Velocity LLC, a light manufacturing enterprise that makes precision engineered cable assemblies for high-speed power, medical, and industrial applications. The company could employ 15 to 20 people.

Public Comments:

Rich Miller, Senior Mechanical Engineer at Cu Velocity, provided details about the proposed business operations. The company manufactures electronic cable assemblies for AI industry clients and defense applications. Operations include semi-automated assembly, soldering, and molding processes using lead-free, ROHS compliant materials. The facility will primarily receive and ship via UPS and FedEx, with minimal truck traffic expected.

Council Discussion:

Council Member Shane Savant raised zoning compliance concerns, noting that M-1 Light Industrial zoning requires 35-foot front yard setbacks and 25-foot side yard setbacks. Neither property meets these requirements: 110 Mendel Lane has a 24-foot

setback, 112 Mendel Lane has a 31-foot setback, and the side yard distance between buildings is only 21 feet. City Attorney Jim Elliott confirmed that separate variance applications would be required.

Council Member Carla Coley questioned the absence of property owners at the meeting despite the zoning requirement.

Public Hearing Closed: 6:27 PM

Motion: Council Member Lonnie Tedders moved to approve the city-initiated rezoning of 110 and 112 Mendel Lane from DC-Commercial to M-1 Light Industrial Second: Council Member Gary Ates Vote: Unanimous approval

Council noted that Cu Velocity LLC must submit separate variance applications for setback requirements before beginning operations.

3. Public Hearing and consideration of an annexation petition by Riley M. Grantham (estate) of 2.96 acres located at 432 Ga. Hwy. 26 (No. 1 Ga. Hwy. 87 By-Pass)

Public Hearing Called to Order: 6:52 PM

The Riley M. Grantham estate filed an annexation petition for a 2.96-acre portion of a larger parcel located at 432 Ga. Hwy. 26 (No. 1 Ga. Hwy. 87 By-Pass). The estate requested annexation to access city water and sewer services for a planned Circle K convenience store and gas station.

Public Comments:

Ginger Asmus, representing the Grantham estate, spoke in favor of annexation for city utilities access.

County Commissioner Mike Davis supported the annexation, noting 15,000 daily vehicles pass the location and emphasizing the benefit of capturing tax revenue from the traffic for both city and county.

Council Discussion:

Council Member Shane Savant clarified that the current parcel totals 5.27 acres, with only 2.96 acres being annexed. The remaining acreage will remain in the county. The 2.96-acre portion will be platted as a separate parcel post-annexation and must be recorded.

Public Hearing Closed: 6:55 PM

Motion: Council Member Lonnie Tedders moved to accept the annexation petition by Riley M. Grantham estate for 2.96 acres at 432 Georgia Highway 26, with the condition that it be platted and recorded Second: Council Member Gary Ates Vote: Unanimous approval

4. Public Hearing and consideration of a Planning Commission recommendation to assign a B-2 zoning designation for a 2.96-acre parcel owned by Riley M. Grantham (estate) parcel located at 432 Ga. Hwy. 26 (No. 1 Ga. Hwy. 87 By-Pass)

Public Hearing Called to Order: 6:59 PM

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 4th at 6:30 PM and voted 5-0 to recommend B-2 Community Business District zoning designation for the 2.96-acre parcel that will be platted as a separate parcel upon annexation.

Public Comments:

No speakers came forward for or against the zoning recommendation.

Public Hearing Closed: 7:02 PM

Motion: Council Member Shane Savant moved to approve B-2 zoning for the 2.96-acre parcel **Second:** Council Member Ates **Vote:** Unanimous approval

5 & 6. [REMOVED FROM AGENDA]

Items 5 and 6 regarding annexation of seventeen unincorporated county islands were removed from the agenda as detailed in Section V above.

7. Appointment of a member to the Housing Authority

Mayor Yeomans announced the appointment of Donna L. Smith, Vice President of Citizens Bank in Cochran, to the Housing Authority. Ms. Smith will serve a five-year term beginning November 20, 2025, replacing Edgar Jarrett who served 10 years on the board. The Housing Authority recommended Ms. Smith as an excellent addition to the board.

No motion or second required for mayoral appointment. No council objections were raised.

8. Consider \$50,000 contribution to the DDA's match for the downtown T-SPLOST project

Downtown Development Authority requested \$50,000 contribution from city to match DDA contributions for downtown streetscape T-SPLOST project. Project will significantly upgrade downtown intersections at Ash, Beach, and Cherry Streets. City's contribution would come from ARPA funds designated for T-SPLOST projects.

Motion: Council Member Carla Coley moved to approve \$50,000 contribution to DDA's match for downtown T-SPLOST project **Second:** Council Member Dianne Lester **Vote:** Unanimous approval

9. Consider approving business license fee adjustments

Council determined that City Clerk Candace Summerall, who had researched and proposed the business license fee adjustments, was not present to explain the proposal. Council members felt it would be better to wait for her explanation since she initiated the project.

Motion: Council Member Gary Ates moved to postpone until the next meeting **Second:** Council Member Gardner **Vote:** Unanimous approval to postpone

VIII. City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

City Manager Richard Newbern provided updates on several ongoing projects:

Utility Infrastructure: Staff is exploring AMI (Automated Meter Infrastructure) alternatives for water, sewer, and natural gas meters after meeting with two vendors. The electronic reading systems will improve efficiency and accuracy for billing. The city is also inquiring about loan terms with the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia for converting over 800 natural gas meters. Tangible proposals are expected by the October 14th meeting.

Park Projects: Willie Basby Park specifications are nearly complete with an anticipated cost of \$169,000, moving toward the bid phase. The Cochran Community Park contractor has largely completed work but is still awaiting restroom delivery. Staff is working on fencing and lighting design.

Tax Digest: The preliminary tax digest from the tax commissioner is incomplete, with the complete version not expected until September 29th. This may delay setting the millage rate until after October 21st, requiring advance advertising. If property tax bills are delayed, the 60-day payment deadline will move from December 20th accordingly.

Housing Development: Smith Douglas Homes continues working on their 60-lot subdivision proposal, having provided topographical mapping information. Staff is developing an accurate neighborhood grid map and may have a company representative

at the next meeting. Time is limited for the December rural workforce housing grant cycle, which could provide \$2 million for roads, water, sewer, and drainage infrastructure.

IX. Council/Mayor Discussion/Items

Council Member Gary Ates: No items

Council Member Trecia Gardner: No items

Council Member Carla Coley: Council Member Coley encouraged collaboration between the city and county for a major celebration of America's Semi-Quincentennial (250th anniversary) in July 2026, similar to the 1976 bicentennial celebration. She noted that only ten months remain for planning.

Council Member Coley recognized September as Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month, emphasizing the importance of removing stigma around mental health discussions. She highlighted that the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is always available and noted that suicide is a leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. She offered her personal availability to anyone needing support and encouraged residents to regularly check on their loved ones.

Council Member Lonnie Tedders: No items

Council Member Dianne Lester: No items

Council Member Shane Savant: Jokingly noted he was born in 1976, so unlike Council Member Coley, he has no memories of the bicentennial celebration.

Mayor Billy Yeomans:

Mayor Yeomans reminded drivers to obey school zone speed limits, particularly in Houston County and Warner Robins, noting that speed cameras are operational and tickets are mailed. He encouraged residents to consider flu vaccinations, enjoy the current cool weather, and check on neighbors. The Mayor thanked city employees, elected officials, and county workers for their service, and specifically thanked Commissioner Mike Davis for attending the meeting.

X. Announcement of Upcoming Meetings and Events

- 1. Next Work Session - Thursday, October 9, 2025 @ 6:00 PM**
- 2. Next Regular Council Meeting - Tuesday, October 14, 2025 @ 6:00 PM**

XI. Executive Session

Purpose: Personnel matter - 2025 performance evaluation for City Manager

Motion: Council Member Coley moved to go into executive session **Second:** Council Member Lester **Vote:** Unanimous approval

Brief recess taken before executive session for public to exit

Meeting recessed for executive session at approximately 7:35 PM Exited Executive Session at 9:12

Meeting concluded following executive session

Adjourned at 9:30 PM

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Candace Summerall
City Clerk

These minutes were prepared using audio and video recording of the meeting proceedings