



## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**January 13, 2026**

**Cochran City Council**

**Regular Called Meeting 6:00 PM**

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

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### **City Council**

### **City Staff**

Carla D Coley, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Trecia Gardner Council Member (District 1, Post 1)	Tiffany Lampp, Interim City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member (District 1, Post 2)	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Rufus Veal, Council Member (District 2 Post 1)	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member (District 2, Post 2)	
Dianne Lester Council Member (District 3, Post 1)	
Shane Savant, Council Member (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 Lee emergency protective measures and debris removal.

## IX. FY 2024–2025 Audit Presentation

The City's CPA 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
  - **Result:** Motion carried.

### **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.
  - **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 : by Councilman Lonnie Tedders Seconded by Councilman Shane Savant.

- \$25 after-hours utility reconnection fee
- \$25 zoning verification letter fee
- \$200 double-wide mobile home fee
- **Result:** Motion carried. Unanimous

## **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.