



## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**January 13, 2026**

**Cochran City Council**

**Regular Called Meeting 6:00 PM**

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

---

### **City Council**

### **City Staff**

Carla D Coley, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Trecia Gardner Council Member ( <i>District 1, Post 1</i> )	Tiffany Lamm, Interim City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member ( <i>District 1, Post 2</i> )	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Rufus Veal, Council Member ( <i>District 2 Post 1</i> )	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member ( <i>District 2, Post 2</i> )	
Dianne Lester Council Member ( <i>District 3, Post 1</i> )	
Shane Savant, Council Member ( <i>District 3, Post 2</i> )	

- 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.

---

## 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.