



DRAFT MINUTES
March 11, 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
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

Mayor Billy Yeomans called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 PM

II. Invocation led by Gary Ates

III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Shane Savant

IV. Attendance

Mayor Yeomans confirmed that all four council members were present, establishing a quorum.

V. Adopt Agenda/Minutes

1. Approve Minutes from Feb 11, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

Motion: Council Member Ates moved to approve the minutes.

Second: Council Member Tedders

Vote: Unanimous approval

2. Approve Agenda for March 11, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

Motion: Council Member Tedders moved to accept the agenda as provided.

Second: Council Member Ates

Vote: Unanimous approval

VII Agenda Items

1. Recognition of Former Council Members

Mayor Yeomans presented plaques to former Council Members Andrew Lemon and Keith Anderson in recognition of their dedicated service to the city of Cochran. Mayor Yeomans expressed gratitude for their leadership, wisdom, and commitment to the community.

2. Recognition of Julie Peche, Former Assistant to the City Manager, Upon Her Retirement

City Manager Richard Newbern recognized Julie Peche, his assistant for three and a half years, presenting her with a plaque acknowledging her unwavering dedication, professionalism, and exceptional service to the city administration.

3. Employee Recognition of the Quarter: Seth Bowman

Public Works Director Willie Farrow recognized Seth Bowman, who has been with Public Works for two years. Mr. Farrow highlighted Bowman's CDL certification, dedication to his work, and willingness to go above and beyond, including volunteering his personal equipment during emergencies and holiday decorating. Mr. Bowman was presented with a check and plaque in appreciation.

VI. Public Comments

Mayor Yeomans noted that public comments were moved to the beginning of the meeting to accommodate citizens. Speakers were limited to three minutes each.

A. Viktor Patel (108 8th Street, Cochran)

Mr. Patel expressed concerns about water meter measurements, property tax assessments, and liquor license approvals. He requested open records relating to water meter inspections and property tax assessments, particularly regarding properties that changed ownership. He also questioned the transparency of the liquor license approval process and stated he had experienced harassment when asking questions.

B. Melissa Barker (Chamber of Commerce)

Ms. Barker shared upcoming Chamber of Commerce events:

- Bingo Night: March 17 at 6:30 PM
- Business After Hours: At Green Law location on 2nd Street, sponsored by Green and Wimberly Law, Middle Georgia Structures, and Sojourner Travel
- Annual Awards and STAR Program Recognition: March 22 at 6 PM at Georgia Hall
- Caffeinated Connections: At the high school at Royal Print in April
- Joint Business After Hours with Eastman Dodge County: At Great Oaks Bank in Eastman
- New event in May: Live music on the courthouse steps and food truck event on the 2nd Saturday

Ms. Barker mentioned that the Chamber is revamping its website and gave special recognition to Public Works.

C. Mickey Harbin (9th Street, Cochran - Downtown Development Authority)

Ms. Harbin, Vice Chair of the Downtown Development Authority, announced a downtown day event on April 26th. The event will begin after the Chamber's Cochran cleanup day and feature activities for children, inflatables, food trucks, and extended hours for downtown businesses. She invited the council to attend and support the event.

VII. Agenda Items Continued

4. Consider a Resolution to Submit the 2025 CDBG Application

Public Works Director Willie Farrow explained the process for selecting properties for the CDBG program, stating that they start in a designated area and proceed systematically without skipping houses. He confirmed that Laverne Bullock at 183 North 8th Street was identified as the 12th eligible participant, meeting all qualification requirements.

Council Member Coley expressed concern about the amount spent on housing rehabilitation through CHIP and CDBG grants since 2019, which approached \$4 million. She requested that the next CDBG application focus on city infrastructure and buildings. She also suggested using regional commissions for grant administration instead of outside administrators, noting they may be able to work with local contractors.

Motion: Council Member Savant moved to approve the resolution to submit the 2025 CDBG application.

Second: Council Member Tedders

Vote: 3-1 (In favor: Ates, Savant, Tedders; Against: Coley)

5. Consider Approving the Submittal of the Georgia DCA Plan First Application

Motion: Council Member Coley moved to submit the application to Georgia DCA for the Plan First designation.

Second: Council Member Savant

Vote: Unanimous approval

6. ADDED ITEM- Consider Approving the Quote for Aqua-Aerobic Systems and CCNA

Motion to Amend Agenda: Council Member Coley moved to amend the agenda to add the purchase of the filtration system to be provided by Aqua Aerobic Systems Incorporated.

Second: Council Member Savant

Vote: Unanimous approval

Motion for Purchase: Council Member Savant moved to proceed with the purchase of new filtration systems to be provided by Aqua Aerobic Systems and installed by CCNA for approximately \$198,000.

Second: Council Member Coley

Vote: Unanimous approval

VII. City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

A. City Manager Report

- 1. Cochran Community Park Update:** City Manager Richard Newbern presented a detailed report on the Cochran Community Park project:

- The 5.28-acre park land was donated by Earl Arnold in December 2021
- In July 2022, engineering confirmed the land was not wetlands
- Funding includes \$75,000 from developers of Havenwood Daisy Senior, \$217,000 from the city's federal ARPA account, and \$1,155,000 from the Governor's Office
- Total project funding: \$1,447,000
- The pre-construction conference is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18th at 10 AM
- The project was redesigned to fit within budget constraints, removing pickleball courts and fitness stations
- ICB Construction Group from Macon was the only bidder at \$1,931 million; working with Falcon Design, the bid was reduced to \$1,439,300
- A prefabricated restroom from CXT Incorporated will cost \$133,737.91 instead of the original \$257,000 estimate
- The revised contract with ICB Construction is \$1,254,336.75, with total project costs at \$1,388,074.53
- Engineer James Jones will attend the April 3rd work session to discuss pavilion and restroom options

Council Members Savant and Coley expressed appreciation for the thorough report, noting it provided a clear timeline and detailed breakdown of costs, including non-visible infrastructure items.

- 2. Wastewater Treatment Plant Filters:** Mr. Newbern discussed the need to replace filters at the wastewater treatment plant. The council later voted to amend the agenda to address this issue.
- 3. Additional Updates:**
 - The city applied for a grant to the Georgia Technology Authority for over \$175,000 for hardware, software, and cybersecurity improvements
 - A homeowners workshop is scheduled for March 18th from 4-6 PM at the Peyton Williams building

- There is a vacancy on the Planning Commission that will be considered at the April 8th council meeting
- The GMA Convention information is due to the City Clerk

VIII. Council Discussion/Items

Council Member Coley:

- Reminded everyone about the election on March 18th for two council seats
- Noted that East SPLOST is up for renewal and voters need to vote in two separate locations
- Mentioned that the first week in April is National Public Health Week, marking its 30th year with the theme "It Starts Here"

Council Member Savant:

- Emphasized the importance of voting, noting low turnout during early voting
- Encouraged citizens who complain on social media to participate in solutions by voting

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Yeomans:

- Thanked participants in the recent clean-up day, particularly Vanessa Sanders for coordinating with schools
- Expressed concern about misinformation on social media regarding the park project
- Encouraged citizens to verify information before sharing it
- Emphasized the importance of voting
- Thanked city employees and council members for their hard work

X. Announcement of Upcoming Meetings and Events

The next work session is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 6 PM.

The next regular council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 6 PM.

XI. Executive Session

Council Member Savant moved to enter executive session for personnel matters and potential litigation.

Council Member Tedders seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 7:10 PM

The council entered executive session after a 5-minute recess.

- A. ✓ Meeting to discuss pending or potential litigation with legal counsel and to discuss or vote on settlement provided in O.C.G.A. §50-14-2(1).
- B. ✓ Meeting to discuss hiring, compensation, evaluation, or disciplinary action for a specific public officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A §50-14-3(b)(2).

Council exited Executive session at 8:04 PM

ADJOURNMENT 8:05 PM

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Candace Summerall
City Clerk

