

COCHRAN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

MAY 12, 2026

Page | 1



MINUTES CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MAY 12, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Cochran City Council was held on May 12th, 6:00 PM in the City Auditorium, 102 N Second Street, Cochran, Georgia with the following present:

Carla Coley, Mayor

Trecia Gardner, Councilmember

Rufus Veal, Councilmember

Dianne Lester, Councilmember

Jim Elliott, City Attorney

Shane Savant, Mayor Pro Tempore

Gary Ates, Councilmember

Lonnie Tedders, Councilmember

Angela Redding, Interim City Manager

Tiffany Fowler, Interim City Clerk

Staff present: Bonnie Raffield, Finance Administrator, Fire Chief Brock Wilcher, Police Chief Jeff Trawick, Willie Farrow, Public Works Director, Code Enforcement Officer Danny Smith.

CALL TO ORDER: The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Carla Coley.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Prayer was led by Mayor Carla Coley followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Present	Absent
Carla Coley	Mayor	√	
Shane Savant	Mayor Pro Tempore, District Three, Post Two	√	
Trecia Gardner	Councilwoman, District One, Post One	√	
Gary Ates	Councilman, District One, Post Two	√	
Rufus Veal	Councilman, District Two, Post One	√	
Lonnie Tedders	Councilman, District Two, Post Two	√	
Dianne Lester	Councilwoman, District Three, Post One	√	

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – May 12, 2026:

Mayor Coley requested two amendments to the agenda:

- Add a presentation to Sgt. Mathew Hancock under Presentations

COCHRAN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

MAY 12, 2026

Page | 2

- Add Outside Agencies Reports under Department Reports

Mayor Pro Tem Savant made a motion to approve the agenda amendments. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lester and carried unanimously. Councilman Veal made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Gardner and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – April 14, 2026

Council reviewed the April 14, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes. Interim City Manager Redding explained minor revisions made to the draft minutes, including title corrections, spacing corrections, and clarification regarding the motion to adjourn.

Councilwoman Lester made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilwoman Gardner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RECOGNITION – GEORGIA CITIES WEEK COLORING CONTEST WINNERS

Interim City Manager Angela Redding recognized participants and winners of the Georgia Cities Week Coloring Contest. Winners received certificates and Bleckley Bucks to support local businesses. Group and individual photographs were taken with the winners. Council also highlighted the importance of supporting local businesses through the Bleckley Bucks program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Pitts welcomed Interim City Manager Angela Redding to the City of Cochran and thanked the City for continued work on the park project. She expressed interest in future park improvements including additional playground equipment and swings.

Ms. Pitts also encouraged the City to continue pursuing additional retail development, specifically mentioning the need for clothing and shoe stores within the community.

PROCLAMATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Coley presented several proclamations and recognitions during the meeting:

International Firefighters' Day Proclamation

The City recognized members of the Cochran Fire Department for their service, sacrifice, and dedication to the community.

National Police Week Proclamation

Mayor Coley proclaimed May 11–16, 2026 as National Police Week in the City of Cochran. The proclamation honored law enforcement officers and specifically recognized the sacrifice of Sgt. John Franklin Conner Sr., who was killed in the line of duty in 1972.

National Public Works Week Recognition

The City recognized the Public Works Department for their contributions to maintaining city infrastructure, public spaces, and community services.

Professional Municipal Clerks Week Recognition

The City recognized May 3–9, 2026 as Professional Municipal Clerks Week and honored Interim City Clerk Tiffany Fowler for her dedication and service to the City of Cochran.

PRESENTATIONS:

Recognition of Chief Brock Wilcher

Chief Brock Wilcher was presented with a special recognition and plaque for his leadership and actions during an emergency structure fire response involving lifesaving emergency medical assistance.

Newly Elected Officials Institute Certificates

Interim City Manager Angela Redding presented certificates to elected officials who completed the Newly Elected Officials Institute training through the Georgia Municipal Association and the University of Georgia:

- Councilmember Trecia Gardner
- Councilmember Diane Lester
- Councilmember Rufus Veal

Sgt. Mathew Hancock – 10 Years of Service Recognition

Sgt. Mathew Hancock was recognized for ten years of dedicated service with the Cochran Fire Department and presented with a Certificate of Service Recognition.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Finance Department

The Finance Department introduced Rebecca Smith, the new Accounts Payable Clerk, and discussed monthly financial reports. Council discussed budget line items, SPLOST allocations, and reconciliation of ARPA grant funding associated with the OPB grant and City Park project.

Fire Department

Chief Brock Wilcher reported on:

- Assistance provided to Brantley County through the Georgia Mutual Aid Agreement during wildfire responses.
- FEMA reimbursement documentation associated with those responses.
- Hiring Elijah Coles as a full-time firefighter
- Fire prevention and community outreach efforts utilizing the new fire safety house.
- Issuing burn permits following the lifting of the burn ban

Council discussed emergency response and dispatch time data for both Fire and EMS services.

Police Department

Chief Jeff Trawick reported on:

- Ongoing officer training including live-fire, simulation, and active shooter exercises.

COCHRAN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

MAY 12, 2026

Page | 4

- Award of a \$200,000 Motorola grant for updated radio equipment.
- Questions regarding confiscated property, fingerprinting services, and community service participation through municipal court.

Public Works Department

Willie Farrow, Director Public Works reported:

- Success of the recent Tire Amnesty Event
- Ongoing enforcement and cleanup efforts related to bulk waste pickup.
- Clarification regarding bulk waste and limb pickup procedures
- Cemetery maintenance and tree trimming
- Sewer repair and utility work at the former La Cabana Express property

Council discussed enforcement concerns regarding apartment complexes, illegal dumping, and public appearance issues.

City Clerk's Office

Interim City Clerk Tiffany Fowler reminded Council regarding RSVP deadlines for upcoming GMA dinners and reported that late business license notices and penalties would be mailed to delinquent businesses.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Danny discussed:

- Sign ordinance violations.
- Stop work orders related to permitting violations.
- Efforts to address dilapidated properties and abandoned signs throughout the city.
- Coordination with landlords and permitting enforcement.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES REPORTS

Chamber of Commerce

Melissa Barker provided updates on:

- The Chamber Classic Golf Tournament
- Second Saturday events
- Upcoming bingo night
- Business After Hours
- Hospital Appreciation Week
- Expansion of Chamber staffing
- Planning for a large July 4th Celebration

Downtown Development Authority

- The Downtown Development Authority thanked the City for support during Downtown Day and highlighted the success of the Touch-a-Truck event and fire safety house.
- The DDA also introduced information regarding a proposed redevelopment fund intended to support reinvestment in downtown properties through public-private partnerships.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider and Approve a Resolution authorizing the mayor to execute the Quit Claim Deed for Gray Rental.
Councilman Tedders moved to approve a resolution authorizing the City to quit claim its interest in parcels shown on a plat prepared by David Arnold dated March 22, 2024, and authorize the mayor to execute the quit claim deed; seconded by Councilman Veal. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Consider and Approve 2026 LRA Application.
Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Savant to approve the roads presented for inclusion in the 2026 Local Road Assistance Program; seconded by Councilwoman Lester. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Consider and Approve a Resolution of the City of Cochran, Georgia Authorizing Participation in Amicus Brief in Chang vs. City of Milton on Remand Before the Georgia Court of Appeals of, if Warranted, The Georgia Supreme Court.
Motion to approve participation in the amicus brief related to Chang v. City of Milton by Councilman Tedders; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Savant. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Consider and Approve a Resolution of the City of Cochran, Georgia Authorizing Approval of Customer Service Policies for the Natural Gas Utility as Mandated by the Public Service Commission.
Motion to approve a resolution approving the Customer Service Policies for the Natural Gas Utility as mandated by the Public Service Commission by Councilwoman Lester; seconded by Councilman Tedders. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Consider and Approve Speed Calming Device (Speed Hump) on Peach Street.
Motion to approve a speed hump on Peach Street was made by Councilman Tedders; seconded by Councilman Veal. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Consider and Approve GMA District 9 Ballot for 2026-2027.
Motion to approve the GMA District 9 ballot and authorize submission on behalf of the City by Mayor Pro Tem Savant; seconded by Councilman Veal. The ballot included support for Councilman Gary Ates for Third Vice President. The motion passes unanimously.
7. Consider and Approve a Voting Delegate for the GMA Convention.
Motion to appoint Mayor Carla D. Coley as the City's voting delegate for the 2026 GMA Convention by Mayor Pro Tem Savant; seconded by Councilman Veal. The motion passed unanimously.
8. Consider and Approve the Flag Bearer for the GMA Convention.
Motion to appoint Councilwoman Trecia Gardner as the City's flag bearer for the GMA Convention by Mayor Pro Tem Savant; second by Councilman Ates. The motion passed unanimously.

INTERIM CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Interim City Manager Angela Redding reported on:

- Receipt of Gas Authority member return funds
- Park project reimbursement grant funding and matching ARPA funds
- Proposed policy updates distributed to Council for review.
- Increased cost for prison work detail services
- Ongoing efforts to obtain signed contracts and agreements for city records.

Council discussed policy revisions, vehicle use policies, and concerns regarding contract timelines and approval procedures by the previous administration.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: No report.

MAYOR/COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmembers made several community announcements including:

- Upcoming Local Baseball Games
- Safety reminders regarding seatbelt use and motorcycle awareness.
- Upcoming school and community musical performances
- Retirement recognition for a longtime local choral and literary director

Councilmembers encouraged continued prayer and support for families affected by recent tragic vehicle accidents involving young community members.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): Mayor Coley requested a motion to enter Executive Session for discussion of potential litigation and personnel matters. Councilman Ates made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:47 PM for potential litigation and personnel matters; seconded by Councilwoman Lester. The motion passed unanimously.

RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Councilman Ates moved to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 9:10 PM; seconded by Councilman Tedders. The City Council approved unanimously to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 9:10 PM.

Councilman Ates moved to approve the City Attorney's response to the Wilcox claim; seconded by Councilman Tedders. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Councilman Ates to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 PM; seconded by Councilman Tedders. The motion passed unanimously.