CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

FY2026 BUDGET MEETING #1

JULY 25, 2025 AT 10:00 AM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 1859 CITY CENTER WAY, JONESBORO, GA 30236

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sartor at 10:08 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by City Clerk Jewett.

- Mayor Donya L. Sartor
- Mayor Pro-Tem Tracey Messick (Absent)
- Councilmember Alfred Dixon
- Councilmember Don Dixon
- Councilmember Bobby Lester
- Councilmember Asjah Miller
- Councilmember Billy Powell (Telephonic Appearance)
- City Attorney, David Dreyer (Absent)
- City Clerk, Shandrella Jewett
- Court Administrator, Laterrial Frances
- Downtown Development Authority Manager, Andrew Simpson
- Economic Development Manager, Faith Akuta
- Police Chief, Christopher Cato
- Public Works Director, Marcus Heard

III. PRESENTATIONS

Congressman David Scott's FY26 Community Project Funding Request update:

Mayor Sartor shared information regarding recent grants that the City received on behalf of Congressman David Scott. The House Appropriations Committee had accepted and funded all 15 Community Project Funding requests that Congressman Scott submitted for various municipalities/cities. The following projects were approved for the City of Jonesboro, Georgia:

- Jonesboro Pedestrian Improvements Project $3,018,059.00 (estimated)
- Jonesboro Enhancing Law Enforcement and Public Safety Project $1,031,000.00 (estimated)

Jonesboro's Police Department:

Police Chief Cato spoke regarding the following:

- Police vehicles, equipment (body and car cameras), and additional personnel.

At this time Mayor Sartor asked Council if they had any questions. There were none.

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for Capital Outlay Projects:
Mayor Sartor gave a briefing on SPLOST and its purpose.

SPLOST – O.C.G.A. §48-8-110 et seq. (the "Act"), authorizes the levy of a one percent County Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (the "SPLOST") for the purpose of financing capital outlay projects for the use and benefit of the County and qualified municipalities within the County.

In November, Jonesboro will have a SPLOST referendum on the ballot. Jonesboro has an estimated SPLOT revenue of about $10,442,624.00. Mayor Sartor shared and handed out a document titled "Clayton County 2026 SPLOST".

Debt Service:
Mayor Sartor spoke regarding the Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Jonesboro – Debt Service Requirements. She stated the City would have a $617,000.00 deficient after SPLOST and that the previous Council had agreed to make incremental increases to address the differences on the City Center building. The City is about 4.5 mills behind, and current Council had voted to opt in to HB 581. Lastly, she stated, "next year we need to look at adopting a millage rate that would give us an additional $617,000.00.

Councilmember D. Dixon stated, "there is no way residents can afford this, especially at 15 mills."

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Council to discuss FY 2026 Budget.

Mayor Sartor led the discussion. She advised Council that she had asked the departments to freeze their budgets and not add anything to it, unless it was necessary.

At this time, Mayor Sartor introduced Karen Slaton-Dixon of JATAXS Consulting Services, LLC. Ms. Slaton-Dixon spoke regarding the following documents that were distributed:

- FY 2026 Draft Budget – Revenue
- FY 2026 Draft Budget – Expenses
- Current 2025 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy

Discussions:

Total General Fund Revenue = $8,454,706.00
Proposed Total General Fund Revenue = $8,655,078.00

- Employee Salaries
  A 5% raise in staff salaries was proposed.

- Millage Rate (Current 2025 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy)
  It was recommended that the millage rate be set at 13 mills. This would cover the $617,000.00 deficient and leave the City with $400,000.00.

  At 13 mills, the Net Taxes $ Increase = $1,238,318.00 (over FY 24 is for Capital Projects within the City, Appeals, Adjustments, etc.)

  The Net Taxes % Increase = 69.97%

  Councilmember Miller asked for a mock property to better understand what the millage rate would look like. Mrs. Weatherington provided this information to Council

- 5-year Capital Improvement Plan

  Ms. Slaton-Dixon recommended that the City add a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to the budget process, as well as a rate schedule for different rentals, court fees, probation rates, business license fees, etc.

  For example:
  Police Chief Cato mentioned his need for personnel and vehicles repairs, etc.

  Public Works Director Heard mentioned his need for a sanitation truck (big and small), backhoe, bucket truck, tractor with brush hog attachment, street sweeper, dump trailer, boom mower, replacement of aged fleet, air conditioning in some of the vehicle, and vehicle repairs, etc. Mayor Sartor acknowledged Public Works staff as essential workers who often perform dangerous tasks.

  Ms. Slaton-Dixon reiterated that $617,000.00 is needed to cover the debt services. However, 11.5 mills would put the City at about $891,240.00 (to cover the debt minus any appeals). There would be no room to spare for anything else that may come up. The County has already taken into account HB 581. $205,000.00 would be in reserve for emergencies.

City Center Building/Infrastructure:

Police Chief Cato spoke about having service agreements for the air condition unit, lighting, plumbing, and water heater, etc.

Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure:

Mr. Tran provided an overview of the City's computer equipment and server infrastructure. He shared a supporting document and emphasized the need to replace 10–12 outdated computers. He recommended implementing a scheduled replacement plan and suggested allocating an annual budget of $15,000 to $20,000 for computer upgrades.

Mr. Tran recommended that the City consider either replacing the server or increasing its memory capacity. Ms. Slaton-Dixon discussed the Dell Lease Program, which offers a monthly payment plan and regularly rotates out computers. Mr. Tran noted that he had contacted Dell, as they are part of a state contract, and confirmed that the program includes a three-year warranty. However, Police Chief Cato stated that the City did not qualify for participation in the Dell Lease Program because the City needed to have a maximum number of computers. Mr. Tran mentioned that the projected annual budget for computer equipment is approximately $20,000, excluding the cost of server upgrades or replacement.

At this time, Mayor Sartor asked each Council to provide feedback regarding the millage rate.

- Councilmember D. Dixon recommended 8.5 mills.
- Councilmember Lester recommended 8.5 mills.
- Councilmember Powell recommended 8.5 mills.
- Councilmember Miller recommended 11.5 mills.
- Councilmember A. Dixon recommended 13 mills.

Mrs. Pat Sebo-Hand (resident and previous Councilmember) spoke regarding previous Council's commitment to take on the debt of the new City Center building and to increasing the millage rate incrementally each year. She recommended a current millage rate of 9.5 - 10 mills. She stated, "not raising it in increments has put us in a bad situation." Also, she stated, "the Council agreed to this City Center building and should own up to it."

Mayor Sartor said by August 18, 2025 the City needs to have a proposed budget and on August 25, 2025 there should be a set millage rate.

Group Insurance:

Councilmember D. Dixon spoke regarding the proposed increase allocated for Group Insurance for each department. Mayor Sartor stated, "anything related to insurance should have been discussed in January. Therefore, "it will have to stay where it is at." Mayor Sartor stated she would still take a look into it.

Mayor Sartor said the City can put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) now for January 2026. The following RFP's should be considered: Property and Casualty Broker, Health Insurance, Legal Services, and an Engineering Firm. She emphasized that none of these impact this year's budget.

Mayor Sartor informed everyone that the next Budget Meeting will be held on Monday, August 4, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. She asked Mrs. Wetherington (Operation/Human Resource) to send a calendar invite to Councilmembers and head staff.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember Don Dixon**
SECONDER: **Councilmember Miller**

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk