CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 08, 2025 AT 6:00 PM

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

MINUTES

I. CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sartor at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by City Clerk Jewett.

- Mayor Donya L. Sartor
- Mayor Pro-Tem Tracey Messick
- Councilmember Alfred Dixon
- Councilmember Don Dixon
- Councilmember Bobby Lester
- Councilmember Asjah Miller (Entered the meeting at 6:42 p.m.)
- Councilmember Billy Powell
- City Attorney, David Dreyer
- City Clerk, Shandrella Jewett
- Community Development Interim Director, Faith Akuta
- Finance Director, Donnette Cannady
- Police Chief, Christopher Cato
- Public Works Director, Marcus Heard

III. INVOCATION

Invocation by Mayor Donya L. Sartor

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A. Council to consider approval and adoption of the amended Agenda.

The following changes were made to the Agenda:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Addition of letter D. - Discussion regarding new information received from Attorney Friduss as it relates to the investigation.
- Addition of letter E. - Council to consider approval of a renewal contract between Luminary MediaWorks and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia for IT Servies. (This item was removed from the Consent Agenda as item D. and placed under Old Business as letter E.)

NEW BUSINESS:

- Addition of letter C. - Council to discuss Downtown Development Authority's Interim Report.

RESULT: **Approved - (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Mesick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**

VI. MAYOR'S PRESENTATION

- Congratulatory remarks were extended to Councilmember A. Dixon for graduating with his master's degree.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation In Honor of Business Networking Day.

B. Presentation by Saville Public Entity - City of Jonesboro 2026-2027 Insurance.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (PLEASE LIMIT COMMENTS TO THREE (3) MINUTES)

- Chelsey Curney (Jonesboro Resident) - Spoke regarding the ongoing investigation concerning the DDA.
- Elana Mercedes Small (Jonesboro Resident) - Spoke regarding the ongoing investigation concerning the DDA.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING(S) & CONSIDERATION(S)

None

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Council to consider approval of the Special Called Council Meeting Amended Minutes dated 10/17/2025. *(This item was tabled from 11/10/2025 Regular Council Meeting.)*

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**

B. Council to consider approval of the Special Called Council Meeting Amended Minutes dated 10/22/2025. *(This item was tabled from 11/10/2025 Regular Council Meeting.)*

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**
SECONDER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**

C. Council to consider approval of the Work Session Minutes dated 11/03/2025.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**

D. Council to consider approval of the Regular Council Meeting Minutes dated 11/10/2025.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**
SECONDER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**

XI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Council to consider approval of an agreement between the City of Jonesboro, Georgia, and Falcon Design Consultants, LLC for Comprehensive Construction Project Management Services related to 100 Gloria Drive Project (Public Works Building).

B. Council to consider approval of a resolution regarding a budget transfer from Poll Workers ($10,000.00 GL #100-1500-52-3851) and Elections ($12,000.00 GL #100-1500-52-3410) to the Building & Facilities Maintenance (GL #100-1500-53-1171) in order to cover the cost of renovations at 173 Could Street that was previously approved by Council.

C. Council to consider approval of a Fee Schedule changes, relative to new State requirements regarding building permit fees.

D. ~~Council to consider approval of a renewal contract between Luminary MediaWorks and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia for IT Services.~~ *(Removed from the Consent Agenda and placed under Old Business as letter E.)*

E. Council to consider approval of a contract between E & K Janitorial Services, LLC and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia for janitorial services.

F. Council to discuss an ordinance regarding Lee Street Park Rules. (Consistent rules and hours - dusk to dawn/seasonal, etc.).

RESULT: **Consent Agenda Approved with the exception of letter D. (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**
SECONDER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**

XII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Council to discuss replacement of the digital signage at Lee Street Park.

RESULT: OLD BUSINESS 01/05/2026

B. Council to discuss bid award and contract for Landscape Maintenance Services for Lee Street Park and The Jonesboro City Center.

Director Heard led the discussion and recommended Scopes Landscape.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**
SECONDER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**

C. Council to discuss 2026 Housing Commitments (Housing Leadership Academy, Atlanta Regional Commission).

Council received a copy of the 2026 Housing Commitments. Mayor Sartor shared that as a member of the Housing Leadership Authority Academy with the Atlanta Regional Commission, "we were tasked as a completion of the program to come up with some housing commitments." Statements and feedback from Council would be shared in the ARC's Housing Commitment Publication.

The first one is up under preserve affordable housing supply by addressing blight. The City would do this by revising existing code to include updated state ordinances related to blighted properties of which we've already received the initial training on that, and we'll be moving forward and also explore additional home repairs from DCA similar to what we did with our CDBG funding.

The second area would be to allow and incentivize innovative housing types. The City would do this by expediting our permitting and considering waving fees for affordable housing. Also consider repurposing buildings that are existing and may not be zoned for housing into affordable housing.

Lastly, is to support local leaders through regional programs similar to Housing Leadership Academy. I would ask that one council member apply for the 2026 Housing Leadership Academy. Also designate one staff member to focus on housing whether or not we would

consider a stipend or add it to our economic development position and encourage all elected officials to attend at least two ARC housing task force meetings per year. And all of those meetings are via Zoom. No vote is required...just had to be read into the record.

D. Discussion regarding new information received from Attorney Friduss as it relates to the investigation.

At this time, Mayor Sartor read the attached statement into the record.

Mayor Sartor asked Council if they wanted to entertain a motion to permanently halt the investigation by Attorney Friduss. No one responded.

Councilmember A. Dixon asked if the investigation was already halted. Mayor Sartor said that Attorney Friduss halted it, but the Council has not. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick stated the attorney reached out to let them know there needed to be corrections. The Ordinance needed to be modified or the Letter of Engagement because there are discrepancies. She proposed that Attorney Dreyer reach out to Attorney Friduss to modify the Engagement Letter so that it would match the Ordinance that the Council passed. Therefore, it would be narrowing the scope of what he would be looking into.

Mayor Sartor said the Ordinance is referencing Financials and a CPA can do that. Mayor Sartor and Mayor Pro-Tem Messick had a back-and-forth conversation defining "Administrative Investigation." Administrative Investigation is what we named it in the Charter.

Mayor Sartor read a section of Ordinance 2025-008. "This investigation shall conduct an administrative investigation into all financial transactions occurring from, to and between the City of Jonesboro and the City of Jonesboro Downtown Development Authority for fiscal year 2025.

Mayor Sartor stated that the administrative investigation is to financials. She further stated that administrative is the type of investigation. "What are they investigating?" "Financial Transactions." She said why not call a CPA instead. The attorney has no background for auditing finances. The City already has a forensic audit and why not just attached this matter to it. She mentioned Mayor Pro-Tem having a previous relationship with the attorney.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said for the record, "she is not a friend of Attorney Friduss."

Mayor Sartor stated that the attorney is not fit nor qualified to do a financial analysis.

At 6:42 p.m. Councilmember Miller entered the meeting.

Councilmember Miller asked if it was factual that more money or more than $50,000.00 was spent on Juneteenth or between Juneteenth and the DDA? Mayor Sartor said the bulk of the spending was related to Downtown other than just regular expenses. She said Maria could help answer this question. Maria said there were maybe 7-8 transactions.

Maria mentioned there were some wires transferred from the City to the DDA. The Firework money was put back into the DDA account from the City. Councilmember Miller concluded that there are processes that were not followed and should be cleaned up. However, there was no wrongdoing, no harm, no foul.

For the record Mayor Sartor proposed that Council do not use Attorney Friduss because he is not a CPA. Mayor Sartor said there are about eight (8) transactions and the City needs to save money.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said, "you have to look at the bigger picture and practices so that the mishandling of money is not continued." Mayor Sartor said in order to save money, Council and staff could look at the transactions and narrow the scope instead of paying someone from outside to do that. Mayor Sartor said this is very discriminatory because no one questioned St. Patrick's Day, the Ice Cream Social, Spring Fling, etc. Again, she stated for the record that she

does not propose Council to use Attorney Friduss because he is not qualified to do a financial audit.

Mayor Sartor asked Council if they wanted to entertain a motion for a recess. No one responded.

Motion to ask City Attorney Dreyer to contact Attorney Friduss and have the Letter of Engagement modified to be more in line with the ordinance that dictates its existence.

RESULT: **N/A**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember D. Dixon**
AYES: **N/A**
NAYES: **N/A**

Councilmember Miller asked if a cap could be placed on the investigation.

Mayor Sartor said for the record, cities can own property and are allowed to own properties.

Mayor Sartor said once Maria finds the number of transactions, an ordinance should be prepared that clearly outlines the number of transactions...he needs a clear scope. She wants Attorney Dreyer to be very specific and clear to the scope when speaking with Attorney Friduss.

Mayor Sartor stated that "an ordinance cannot be prepared tonight because no vote can be taken tonight because this was an item added to the agenda and I am not in the majority. I'm not in the unanimous vote for it to be voted on tonight." Again, she restated, "This item was added to the agenda. Items can be added to the agenda by majority vote, but items can only be voted on by unanimous vote. I do not consent to voting for this particular item."

Point of Personal Privilege by Mayor Pro-Tem Messick – With us trying to cooperating ...statement not completed.

E. Council to consider approval of a renewal contract between Luminary MediaWorks and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia for IT Servies.

Mayor Sartor shared that Mr. Tran will add a subsequent contract. It would run separate and the City will allocate a certain amount of funding along with giving a rate to make sure up to 10 meetings per the year would be live streamed. The City would cover it and would need to ensure that they are not doing 50 hours of live streaming.

Councilmember A. Dixon said thank you so much.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Council to consider a resolution regarding a budget transfer of $8,000.00 from Office Supplies line item 100-1500-53-1110 to Special Events line item 100-1500-53-1110 in order to cover the cost of Christmas Events at the City Center.

Mayor Sartor shared the City would like to provide a $100.00 bonus to all full-time staff and $50.00 bonus to all part-time and reserve officers. The City's traditional Christmas event to be included.

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

B. Council to discuss FY25 Special Initiative Funds.

The purpose of the Special Initiative Funds was discussed. It cannot be used to give to individual people or person.

C. Discussion regarding Downtown Development Interim Report.

Mayor Pro- Tem Messick asked if the information from the report could be shared.

Mayor Sartor said nothing in the report can be shared. If shared, it could be called into questions or jeopardize any type of future litigation. It could wait until January 2026.

Santia Fox voluntarily left the meeting without being escorted out due to comments being made.

XIV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

A. Economic Development Report by Faith Akuta (Interim Director of Community Development)

Interim Director Akuta led the discussion.
Councilmember Miller asked for a list of the businesses.
Councilmember A. Dixon asked for an update regarding the dumpster issue for Broad Street.
Mayor Sartor spoke regarding the SPLOST Referendums for 2008 (Broad Street Renovations) and other years.

XV. REPORT OF CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

Comments by Councilmember A. Dixon:

- Good to see everyone at the Christmas Parade and thanked Arts Clayton

Comments by Councilmember Miller:

- Thanked Staff for everything they do
- Congratulatory remarks extended to Councilmember A. Dixon for receiving his master's degree
- 2nd Annual Holiday Christmas Program. Registration closes on December 15, 2025
- Thanked Councilmembers that won't be returning next year
- Welcomed new Councilmember and thanked them for coming to the meeting and for their love of the community

Comments by Mayor Pro-Tem Messick:

- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and to remember the reason for the season
- Thanked Councilmember Miller for reaching out to the community this time of year
- Spoke regarding her Christmas Scholar Program Troublemakers partnership with the City. Several families in need (17 children). Deadline is Monday of next week.
- Stated it has been a privilege to serve with Councilmembers D. Dixon, Lester, and Powell. Said she appreciate their dedication and service

Comments by Councilmember Lester:

- Said it has been an interesting eight (8) years of coming and going
- Wished the incoming new Councilmember luck and to keep an open mind
- Staff is professional and uplifting when you need it and they are very informative
- Thanked the Citizens of Jonesboro for their support over the years

Comments by Councilmember D. Dixon:

- Thanked everyone for showing up
- Stated he has learned a lot of good things and bad things, but it will equal out.
- Encouraged everyone to be safe
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas

Comments by Councilmember Powell:

- Said he has been on the Council for 14 years and when Mayor and Council work together, they achieved a lot of things
- Enjoy working here and living in Jonesboro

XVI. REPORT OF MAYOR

- Thanked staff for helping out with the Christmas Parade
- Tree Lighting was spectacular
- Thanked Luminary MediaWorks for helping out with the Tree Lighting
- Quote – "Let the past stay where it is...behind you"
- Wished Councilmembers D. Dixon, Lester, and Powell the best and hope they return back to being neighbors and continue living in Jonesboro

XVII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation, real estate, or personnel matters.

None

B. Consider any action(s), if necessary, based on decision(s) made in Executive Session.

None

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember Powell**
SECONDER: **Councilmember D. Dixon**

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk

12/8/25 Mtg

Good evening Councilmembers and residents of Jonesboro.

Tonight, I want to speak directly to the citizens and taxpayers of this City, because you deserve both clarity and honesty about what has taken place over the last several weeks.

On October 22, the Council passed an Ordinance authorizing an administrative investigation. That Ordinance is very clear. It authorizes an investigation only into financial transactions occurring from, to, and between the City of Jonesboro and the Downtown Development Authority, and only for fiscal year 2025, beginning January 1 and ending October 20. That is the entire scope of what the Council actually passed.

Despite that limited and defined scope, the engagement letter drafted by Hall Booth Smith attempted to create a much broader, open-ended investigation into matters never authorized by law. For over a week, that discrepancy was raised, questioned, and brought to the Council's attention, yet the Council refused repeatedly, three separate times, to pause the investigation, review the requests, or realign it with the law that they themselves passed.

It reached a point where, in order to protect the taxpayers and ensure compliance with the law, I was forced, in my official capacity as Mayor, to prepare a Temporary Restraining Order. A TRO should never have been necessary. Had the Council simply followed the Ordinance or even paused to reconcile the scope as I requested, this additional legal expense and effort would not have been required.

It was not the Council who halted the unauthorized investigation. It was the investigator himself. In his email today, Hall Booth Smith openly acknowledged that the engagement letter they drafted does not match the Ordinance, and that they cannot legally continue with the broader investigation unless the Ordinance is changed. That admission confirms what has been evident from the start: the City cannot (and should not) pay for an investigation that exceeds what was legally authorized.

And that brings us to a second critical point for taxpayers:

While the Council pushed forward with an investigation outside the law, the Downtown Development Authority had already completed its own Interim Investigative Report. That report covers the same time period, January to the fall of 2025, and the same subject matter the Ordinance identifies: the financial transactions relating to the DDA during 2025. The DDA investigator interviewed witnesses, reviewed documents, and issued a written report. Those findings already exist. The factual questions the Ordinance sought to review have, quite simply, already been answered.

So for the citizens of this City:

the investigation the Council authorized has already been done, by the proper governing body.

There is nothing left for a second, City-funded investigation to accomplish.

Finally, I want to address an issue that is important for transparency: my legal fees.

I did not initiate this investigation. I did not expand its scope. I did not create the conflict between the Ordinance and the engagement letter. Yet I have been required to retain legal counsel and respond to actions taken outside the law. Georgia law is clear that when an elected official must obtain counsel to defend themselves in the performance of their official duties, and when the actions prompting that defense were not initiated by the official, the City may lawfully cover those expenses. I will be submitting my legal costs to the City consistent with that legal authority, and the public will have full visibility into that process.

Tonight, I am asking this Council, again, to protect the taxpayers of Jonesboro by following the law, honoring the limits of the Ordinance that was actually passed, and refraining from spending additional public funds on matters already investigated and resolved.

I remain committed to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the lawful use of taxpayer dollars. And I welcome any investigation conducted within the legal scope authorized by the Council.

Despite the efforts and spending of more than one hundred thousand dollars of taxpayer dollars to find wrongdoing by me, Mayor Pro Tem Messick and outgoing councilmen Don Dixon, Billy Power, and _____, have been unsuccessful. The reason why is simple: there is none.

I am looking forward to a future where the council of Jonesboro can focus on the business of the city and not the undoing of its Mayor. fhank you.

Sent from my iPhone