CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

JANUARY 09, 2026 AT 10:00 AM

JONESBORO CITY CENTER - COMMUNITY ROOM - 1859 CITY CENTER WAY, JONESBORO, GA 30236

MINUTES

I. CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:18 a.m. by City Clerk Jewett

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by City Clerk Jewett

- Mayor Donya L. Sartor
- Mayor Pro-Tem Asjah Miller (Left meeting at 12:43 p.m.)
- Councilmember Chelsey Curney
- Councilmember Alfred Dixon (Entered meeting at 11:05 a.m.)
- Councilmember Cameron Dixon (Entered meeting at 11:05 a.m.)
- Councilmember Santia Fox
- Councilmember Tracey Messick (Absent)
- City Attorney, LaTonya Nix Wiley
- City Clerk, Shandrella Jewett
- Community Development Director, Faith Akuta (Absent)
- Finance Director, Karen Slaton-Dixon
- Police Chief, Christopher Cato (Absent)
- Public Works Director, Marcus Heard (Absent)

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Downtown Development Appointments

Mayor and Council held a discussion regarding the individuals who applied for the DDA Board Member roles. Any open seating would be re-advertised in September 2026.

Mayor and Council had a discussion regarding the separation of Main Street from DDA.

At this time, Mayor Sartor shared that Shelby Bently completed the Main Street Monthly Report. The following topics were discussed:

- Research regarding a Main Street Jonesboro Program Proposal.
- Separate Main Street – Once the Board is created (via resolution or ordinance), a set of Bylaws would have to be done as well. Mayor Sartor stated, "must have a dedicated staff person at 75% and Shelby would assume her role at 25%; Taylor would probably move back into her role at full capacity.

Mayor Sartor made a recommendation for the City to fund the Main Street Program at $10,000.00 per year for the first three (3) years. They would have line items and not a separate checking account. They would have a treasurer as well. The program would roll out in February 2026. The newsletter would have a page dedicated to Main Street.

The Promotion Committee would dissolve, and it would only be the Main Street Committee. Main Street has a map that would need to be expanded. It would need to be broader in order to tie in key corridors such as main street, and the south & north gateways.

Mayor Sartor asked Council if they were okay with separating the Main Street Program from DDA. Council agreed.

City Attorney Wiley said there was an ordinance combining the DDA and Main Street. A new ordinance disconnecting Main Street from the DDA must be done.

Mayor Sartor said Ms. Bentley has worked really hard on the Main Street Program and would recommend her as the Main Street Director.

B. Economic/Downtown Development Executive Director.

Mayor Sartor said she would like to move forward with the appointment of an Economic/Downtown Development Director on Monday. This is a salaried position and not a contract position. The salary would be $110,000.00. Looking forward to presenting him at Council Meeting on Monday, January 12, 2026.

C. City Manager Position

Mayor Sartor led the discussion and sought input from Council about compensating her for serving in both roles as the Mayor and City Manager. She informed Council that the Mayor of the City of Lovejoy fulfills the duties of City Manager, per Lovejoy's Charter. Mayor Sartor proposed a total compensation of $100,000.00, which would include the Mayor's salary. Also, she noted that the appointment of the City Manager would be made annually.

Councilmember Curney said she would be comfortable with the proposal if the Mayor had an advisor available to provide guidance. Mayor Sartor recommended that the advisor receive compensation. She asked City Attorney Wiley to check further into the matter and provide an update as it relates to serving as Mayor and City Manager.

At 11:05 a.m. Councilmembers A. Dixon and C. Dixon entered the meeting.

Councilmember Fox said the roles should remain separated and that a City Manager is needed in order to gain the trust of the people, prepare for audits, along with having certain skill sets. She said the City needs a buffer.

Mayor Sartor said she doesn't mind doing a 3-month contract, as a City Manager.

Councilmember Curney – In favor of the proposal only if Mayor has an advisor

Councilmember C. Dixon – In opposition of the proposal

Councilmember A. Dixon – In opposition of the proposal

Mayor Pro-Tem Miller – In opposition of the proposal. Also stated, there may be an issue for staff to go to the Mayor and HR. Prefers a City Manager as the buffer. Stated there are issues in the Charter that need to be cleared up whether the Mayor be the City Manager or not. Need clarity in the role of a City Manager as supervisor or Manager.

City Attorney Wiley stated the City of Jonesboro created the City Manager's position via Resolution along with defining the duties. The Mayor has CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and CAO (Chief Administrative Official) Responsibility.

Mayor Sartor said she would be mindful who comes in the role and the salary it would cost. She further stated that the policy puts the buffer in there (Department Director, HR, Mayor).

It was shared that the Directors report to the Mayor and not the City Manager, per the Charter.

Council agreed to poll the residents and do an anonymous poll of staff. Mayor said this would be a Climate Survey and she would get some quotes from a third-party analytic company.

Mayor Sartor mentioned the current salary for the City Manager's position is $130,000.00 to $140,000.00. Mayor Pro-Tem Miller made a recommendation to increase it at $160,000.00 to $180,000.00.

At this time, Mayor Sartor said to take her off the board for City Manager. She does not want to spend money exploring this option. Instead, she wants to help bring staff up to date with their salary.

Councilmember C. Dixon asked, "is it even possible to hire a City Manager." Mayor Pro-Tem Miller said hiring a City Manager that you won't be able to manage is the challenge. She further stated, "we can't stop the Mayor from doing the City Manager's role whether Mayor is the City Manager or not....with or without compensation." Mayor Sartor said she doesn't want to pay a City Manager $200.000.00 when staff is not at minimum wage of $22.00 per hour.

Mayor Pro-Tem Miller asked if there was a way to achieve Mayor getting compensated with City Manager's pay without being called a City Manager. Mayor Sartor said we should go back to having a City Administrator (Salary $75,000.00 - $85,000.00) instead of a City Manager. City Attorney Wiley said the ordinance can be changed. Lastly, Mayor Sartor said to keep it like it is, and the City Attorney will check with the City Attorney of Lovejoy as it relates to a Mayor serving in both roles.

D. FY26 Proposed Budget

Mayor and Council went over certain line-items regarding FY26 Proposed Budget. The budget is currently at $8,740,000.00.

Line-Item 10	Youth Council (JYCG)	Increased to $6,000.00 along with funding IT Streaming Services for JYCG Meetings at $2,400.00 per month.
Line-Item 11-17	Travel	Increased: $5,000.00 for Mayor Sartor. $2,500.00 for Mayor Pro-Tem Miller, Council A. Dixon, and Council Messick. $3,000.00 for newly elected Councilmembers: Curney, C. Dixon, and Council Fox.
Line-Item 29-35	Special Initiatives	Increased: $3,000.00 for Mayor Sartor. $2,500.00 for Mayor Pro-Tem Miller, Councilmembers: A. Dixon & Messick. $2,000.00 for the newly elected Councilmembers: Curney, C. Dixon, and Fox.
Line-Item 57	City Events	Increase to $50,000.00

Line-Item 86	Economic Development Authority (Main Street Committee)	Added $10,000.00

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

Kendra Emeruem - Spoke about the services she provides and expressed her support for Jonesboro Youth City Government receiving a budget of $15,000.00. She advocated on behalf of JYCG and shared that she would be joining/supporting them and wanted to introduce herself.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

RESULT: **Approved (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember Fox**
SECONDER: **Councilmember C. Dixon**

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk