CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

OCTOBER 22, 2025 AT 6:00 PM

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

MINUTES – AMENDMENT 1

I. CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sartor at 6:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Assistant City Clerk, Pat Daniel.

- Mayor Donya L. Sartor
- Mayor Pro-Tem Tracey Messick
- Councilmember Alfred Dixon
- Councilmember Don Dixon
- Councilmember Bobby Lester
- Councilmember Asjah Miller (Arrived during Executive Session around 6:25 p.m.)
- Councilmember Billy Powell
- City Attorney, David Dreyer
- City Clerk, Shandrella Jewett (Absent)
- Assistant City Clerk, Pat Daniel
- Community Development Interim Director, Faith Akuta
- Finance Director, Donnette Cannady
- Human Resources/Operation, Maria Wetherington
- Police Chief, Christopher Cato
- Public Works Director, Marcus Heard

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Council to consider investigator, vote to confirm said investigator, and sign a letter of engagement (if available) based on the vote at the Special Called Council Meeting that was held on Friday, October 17, 2025.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick noted that she received a Letter of Engagement from Hall Booth Smith, P.C. that was forwarded to Council. Councilmember A. Dixon stated that Attorney Charles Boring of Robins Litigation and Regulatory Law were interested. Mayor Sartor noted that she had an attorney for consideration by the name of Peter Andrews, Esquire and she asked if any of the attorneys gave a range of costs.

Mayor Sartor mentioned that a Formal Engagement Letter is typically done after Council selects an individual and has had a discussion.

At this time Mayor Sartor spoke about a portion of the Formal Engagement Letter from Attorney Phillip Friduss of Hall Booth Smith, P.C. that read, *"While your request does not so mention, we will also investigate others' fiscal activities during the ongoing investigation as the evidence may support."* She pointed out that the Formal Engagement Letter included references to forensic audit allegations and said this almost mirrors what the forensic audit is doing.

Mayor Sartor read the Engagement Letter of Plante Moran (current forensic auditors) and stated, "for the record, this is what we are already engaging in at the amount of $95,000.00." She stated, "I am not opposed to anything investigative, but recommend that we extend the scope of our existing forensic audit probably at a cost....that way it will be some continuity along with saving the taxpayer some money." She said an email can be sent out tomorrow to add it to the current scope under phase three...risk-based analysis to include item 16 an independent investigation into allegations against Mayor Sartor involving purported financial irregularities as well as investigate others ("not sure what others is").

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick stated, "we are in the midst of a forensic audit to discover financial discrepancies within the City and this letter does say that they would look at some of the results from the forensic audit to compare." She stated, this is a much narrower scope than the forensic audit so that we can get the DDA (Downtown Development Authority) back on track and we can find out what has happened with our finances.

Mayor Sartor stated, "this is not a narrow scope." She asked Mayor Pro-Tem Messick to list the allegations. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said the allegations were "confusion with the funds." Mayor Sartor said that is not an allegation. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick read the following allegations:

1. Funds moving from the City to the DDA without Council's approval.

   Mayor Sartor replied that funds were made from the City to the DDA without Council's approval – "I did not know we had to...this process has been followed for the last 4-5 years prior to me being on Council." She said the City can save some money by stating that she authorized the movement of the money from the City to the DDA and to her knowledge, there is no record of a vote to transfer funds that should have been directly deposited into the DDA's account from the City. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said this was a misappropriation of funds to spend City money and move it without Council's approval. She further said an investigation would still need to be done in order to see what actions needs to be taken upon Mayor Sartor's confession of misappropriation. Mayor Sartor said she did not confess to misappropriation of funds and that misappropriation of funding means that money that was intended for something was utilized for something else. The money that was moved was money from sponsorship that was deposited into the City's account that needed to go back to the DDA. City Attorney Dreyer said there was a broad range of definitions for misappropriated under the Georgia Code (such as civil fraud, criminal allegations, etc.).

A motion was made for Council to consider the approval of Hall Booth Smith, P.C. as the investigators for the investigation that has already been approved by the Council.

RESULT:	**Approved (Vote 5 to 1)**
MOVER:	**Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER:	**Councilmember D. Dixon**
AYES:	**Mayor Pro-Tem Messick; Councilmember A. Dixon, D. Dixon, Lester & Powell**
NAYS:	**Mayor Sartor**

At this time, Mayor Pro-Tem Messick stated the Letter of Engagement needed to be signed for the investigator. Councilmember D. Dixon stated the ordinance has to be signed as well.

Mayor Sartor asked City Attorney Dreyer if he had reviewed the ordinance and he said yes. Also, Mayor Sartor asked who typed the ordinance and Councilmember D. Dixon replied he typed it. Mayor Sartor expressed concerns regarding a Councilmember typing ordinances when the City pays the City Attorney to create them.

Mayor Sartor asked Council if they were going to entertain a monetary amount regarding this matter so that financial arrangements can be made as to where the funds would come from.

Mayor Sartor stated for the record, "Council you all know that we spent $250,000.00 of taxpayers money for your previous investigation that included $30,000.00 for the investigator, $180,000.00 for my attorney, and roughly $90,000.00 for your attorney, and now we are about to go back through that again. The report that came out of $30,000.00....the judge in Clayton County Superior Court ruled that it was compiled not in compliance to the Charter that reads... you should only do an investigation if the allegations were not of criminal nature. Although the allegations were of criminal nature, you all still proceeded. We spent $252,000.00 for the judge to say you can't do anything with the 30-page report. So, I just wanted to say that for the record. We will move forward with this, but I do feel like taxpayers should know. Is there a cap? Is there an amount? I think they should know that we will also investigate others. I think others should be defined."

Mayor Sartor asked City Attorney Dreyer when did he first received the Letter of Engagement? City Attorney Dreyer replied by stating the ordinance is supposed to be paired with the Engagement Letter. Councilmember D. Dixon said the Engagement Letter deals with the ordinance. The ordinance states that the investigation shall be from January 1st to October 20, 2025. Mayor Sartor said she does not feel comfortable with a Council person writing an ordinance (even though he is an attorney). She stated she was not opposed to the ordinance but does not want to get into the habit of Councilmembers writing ordinances, which is very unusual. However, she said she is okay with moving forward with the ordinance.

City Attorney Dreyer wanted to provide clarity by stating the ordinance that Councilmember D. Dixon provided does narrow the scope of the Engagement Letter. However, Mayor Sartor stated that she does not feel comfortable signing an Engagement Letter that does not align with the ordinance. Mayor Sartor questioned why the ordinance only included year 2025 and does not include other years such as year 2022.

At this time, a motion was made to approve the ordinance (see attached) setting forth the investigation by Phillip Fridus, Esquire (as the investigator) regarding the financial obligations for the City of Jonesboro to the Downtown Development Authority for the City of Jonesboro.

RESULT:	**Approved (Vote 5 to 1)**
MOVER:	**Councilmember D. Dixon**
SECONDER:	**Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
AYES:	**Mayor Pro-Tem Messick; Councilmembers D. Dixon, A. Dixon, Lester & Powell**
NAYS:	**Mayor Sartor**

Mayor Sartor stated for the record, "the ordinance was not prepared by our City Attorney and that it was prepared by Councilmember D. Dixon. She said to City Attorney Dreyer, "you are consenting that this is lawfully correct?" City Attorney Dreyer said he did not find anything that was wrong or improper with the ordinance. She told the City Attorney that it is his job to create the City's ordinances.

Mayor Sartor wanted the record to reflect that "the investigative attorney has already called our City Attorney prior to us engaging the attorney, in which I have some concerns about that. He had been speaking to Councilmembers prior to the approval."

Mayor Sartor stated for the record, "the City has not made any financial obligations or arrangements to pay for this and therefore, there is no cap on the scope or the amount that can be spent."

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

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

At 6:24 p.m., Council entered into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, litigation, and real estate.

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

At 7:26 p.m., Council reconvened the Special Called Council Meeting.

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

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

A motion was made to appoint Shelby Bentley as the Main Street Manager for an interim period of time until December 31, 2025.

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

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

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

Donya L. Sartor

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Pat Daniel

Pat Daniel, Assistant City Clerk

Shandrella Jewett

Typed by City Clerk, Shandrella Jewett

STATE OF GEORGIA

CITY OF JONESBORO

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-008

AN ORDINANCE TO APPOINT AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR TO CONDUCT AN ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE VII (ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS) IN THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF JONESBORO, GEORGIA; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY ; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the duly elected governing authority of the City of Jonesboro, Georgia (the "City") is the Mayor and Council thereof;

WHEREAS, the City Charter authorizes the City of Jonesboro to make inquiries and investigations into the affairs of the city and conduct of any department, office, or agency thereof;

WHEREAS, Article VII, Division 1, Sections 2-251 through 2-256 of the City's Code of Ordinances outlines the procedure for the appointment of an investigator, the authority of an investigator, uniform procedures for the conduct of the investigator, admission of relevant evidence, the findings of the appointed investigator and procedure to be used by the appointed investigator for matters of a criminal nature,

WHEREAS, a majority of the members of the Jonesboro City Council desire to appoint an investigator to conduct an administrative investigation into all financial transactions occurring from, to, and between, the City of Jonesboro, Georgia and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia's Downtown Development Authority for fiscal year 2025 beginning January 1st, 2025, and ending October 20, 2025.

WHEREAS, the members of the Jonesboro City Council desire the investigator to be an independent third-party and be licensed to practice law in the State of Georgia to ensure the investigation will be conducted impartially and in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal laws.

BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, GEORGIA, and by the authority thereof:

Section 1. The members of the Jonesboro City Council hereby appoint _____ as an investigating officer. The investigator shall conduct an administrative investigation into all financial transactions occurring from, to, and between, the City of Jonesboro, Georgia and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia's Downtown Development Authority for fiscal year 2025 beginning January 1st, 2025, and ending October 20, 2025. The investigator shall conduct the investigation pursuant to the requirements codified in Article VII (Administrative Investigations) of the City's Code of Ordinances, in addition to any requirements included herein. Unless otherwise required by law or court order, the subject matter and details of the active investigation shall be kept confidential to ensure the integrity of the investigation and safety of all individuals involved.

SECTION 2. The preamble of this Ordinance shall be considered to be and is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully incorporated herein.

SECTION 3. (a) It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that all sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance are or were, upon their enactment, believed by the Mayor and Council to be fully valid, enforceable and constitutional.

(b) It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, each and every section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is severable from every other section, paragraph, sentence,

clause or phrase of this Ordinance. It is hereby further declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, no section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is mutually dependent upon any other section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance

(c) In the event that any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance shall, for any reason whatsoever, be declared invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, it is the express intent of the Mayor and Council that such invalidity, unconstitutionality or unenforceability shall, to the greatest extent allowed by law, not rendered invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or sections of this Ordinance and that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, all remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance shall remain valid, constitutional, enforceable, and of full force and effect.

SECTION 4. All ordinances and parts of ordinance in conflict herewith are expressly repealed to the extent of the conflict only.

SECTION 5. The effective date of this Ordinance shall be the date of its adoption by the Mayor and Council unless otherwise stated herein.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk, with the concurrence of the City Attorney, is authorized to correct any scrivener's errors found in the ordinance, including any exhibits, as enacted.

ORDAINED this 22nd day of October, 2025.

CITY OF JONESBORO, GEORGIA

Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Tracey Messick, Mayor Pro Tem

Alfred Dixon

Don Dixon

Bobby Lester

Asjah Miller

Billy Powell

SEAL

ATTEST:

Pat Daniel 10/22/25

Asst. **City Clerk**

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney