CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

OCTOBER 17, 2025 AT 6:30 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 6:32 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
- 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 (Absent)
- Human Resources/Operation, Maria Wetherington
- Police Chief, Christopher Cato
- Public Works Director, Marcus Heard

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Council to discuss conflicting reports concerning the relationship of the City of Jonesboro to the Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick addressed concerns about the relationship between the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City of Jonesboro. She emphasized the need for City Council to gain clarity on how the two entities interact and operate. According to her understanding, the City Council established the DDA in 2016, but functions completely separate from the City of Jonesboro. City Attorney Dreyer agreed that the DDA is an independent entity.

Mayor Sartor said, "the questions for us to leave here with is – Is the DDA a profit or non-profit?" City Attorney Dreyer stated it was neither. He further said, "it is a special category of entity created by the State General Assembly (Quasi-Governmental)." Mayor Sartor, who serves as an Ex Officio member mentioned that the DDA is filed with the Department of

Community Affairs and has a Board of Directors and an Executive Director. She noted that every city has a different relationship with their DDA. There are state requirements (O.C.G.A) and Bylaws for a DDA.

Mayor Sartor spoke regarding the Downtown Development 101 class that was offered to every Councilmember this year, which sets the foundation. She further stated that Bylaws and the Charter are readily available online or can be provided as well. City Attorney Dreyer referenced Georgia Code Section 36-45-4 which *"mandates that all persons elected as members of a municipal governing authority who were not serving as such on July 1, 1990, must enroll in, attend, and satisfactorily complete a course of training and education on matters related to municipal government operations. This training includes topics such as local government finance, budgeting, taxation, public works, environmental management, and public safety. All expenses incurred by newly elected members related to this training must be covered by public funds, while any costs not covered by state funds are to be borne by the municipal governing authority."*

At this time, Councilmember Powell shared that Attorney Kirby Glaze would be able to answer all of their questions regarding the DDA. Mayor Sartor spoke with Attorney Glaze last week and said he would schedule a meeting with Mayor and Council to go over things pertaining to the DDA. Mayor Sartor emphasized the DDA and Main Street Program were combined.

Mayor and Council agreed to seek clarity on whether the DDA is a non-profit or not.

B. Council to discuss financial matters related to recent events that occurred on June 19, 2025 and July 3, 2025.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick asked for clarification on which expenses were paid by the City versus the DDA and asked to review corresponding invoices. Mayor Sartor showed the same PowerPoint that was shared on 10/14/25 regarding this specific matter.

The City hosted a Fourth of July Celebration on July 3, 2025 - The presentation showed a list of vendors and the amounts paid. The total amount paid was $28,428.89 which was paid entirely by the City of Jonesboro.

Mayor Sartor asked Mayor Pro-Tem Messick if she wanted the invoice(s) and contract(s) for all of the vendors or certain ones. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick responded by expressing confusion due to what she considered conflicting information regarding the fireworks expenses. The PowerPoint presentation for the July 3rd event listed the cost as $13,750.00, and she noted that she had been told the DDA had paid the same amount. Mayor Sartor said, " there was a contract with Deep South Fireworks for $6,975.00 and we had $13,000.00. There are minutes that reflect the City of Jonesboro had agreed to pay for the fireworks regarding July 3rd and June 19th events. Two separate spreadsheets are kept when planning the events (one that the City covers and one that DDA covers). The DDA only partnered with the Juneteenth event. It did not partner for the July 3rd event. Mayor Sartor shared that "in order to get the discount for the fireworks, they gave us one invoice which showed both of them." Mayor Sartor stated that Mr. Simpson has said, for the record, during the DDA meeting that an error was made by not including the fireworks on the spreadsheet for payment by the City. Mayor Sartor said she was later informed that it was time to make a payment for the Fourth of July fireworks (a deposit for both of them). At that time, a check was written from the DDA account. The DDA has a paper checkbook, however, the City does not have one. Mr. Simpson wrote a check to the DDA."

At this time, Mayor Sartor spoke regarding the Juneteenth expenses. "She said when the DDA paid for the fireworks, the City reimbursed the DDA on 09/26/2025. The original check for Deep South Fireworks was written from the DDA account. "When we realized the error, and balanced the books, the City wrote a check to the DDA." Therefore, the City ultimately paid

for it. Mayor Sartor asked Mrs. Wetherington to come before Council and speak regarding the transfer of the money. Mrs. Wetherington stated that a wire transfer was done and everything had been reconciled.

The PowerPoint presentation showed the total amount of sponsorship collected, how it was received, and when it was credited. Injury to Wellness Center gave a $10,000.00 check and allocated $5,000.00 to DDA and $5,000.00 to Juneteenth. Scopes wrote a check made payable to the City and the City transferred the money to the DDA. There was a $650.00 revenue from food trucks which brought the total to $35,150.00. There was an outstanding amount of $6,000.00 from the Board of Commission which will "hit" in November (promissory note).

Mayor Sartor clarified the DDA is not set up to receive electronic funds.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said she understood the reason that it was handled in the way that it was, however, "with some of our other sponsorships, it shows that these were received in March, April, May, and June." She asked why was that money (if it was designated for the DDA), made payable to the City of Jonesboro? She stated those were two separate entities. Mayor Sartor clarified that all of the sponsorships were debited directly into the DDA account. The only ones that were not directly debited into the DDA account were the Injury to Wellness Center and Scopes. Injury to Wellness Center had presented their check at a previous Council meeting and Scopes wrote a check inadvertently to the City of Jonesboro. Truist Bank would only do electronic payment. The DDA does not have an electronic means to accept payments, so they sent it to the City. The City reconciled everything on 09/26/25 and sent $8,500.00 to the DDA.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick asked, "why was $25,103.92 transferred at one time without it being discussed with Council?" At this time, Mayor Sartor stated this was a discussion and not an interrogation in which she felt it was moving towards. The Robert Rules of Order was discussed at this time.

C. Council to discuss current and past partnerships with the Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Sartor asked Council if they were ready to discuss current and past partnerships with DDA. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said yes, "I think the DDA would be helpful to just have that conversation." Mayor Sartor replied, "Not tonight".

D. Council to discuss sponsorships offered at each event.

Mayor Sartor said she sent a copy of the sponsorship packets to Council. Also, she distributed a document to Council during the meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said, "when the sponsorship packets were sent out to organizations and local businesses, was this for the DDA or for the City of Jonesboro, or was it a partnership?" Mayor Sartor stated, any questions related to the sponsorship packet, she would be more than happy to answer. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said, if the sponsorships were made out to the City of Jonesboro, they should have went into the City of Jonesboro funds to be used for these events. In the spirit of transparency, she said she felt it was unfair to keep someone from sharing information that the DDA has concerning these events. She requested that the Chair of the DDA come forward to speak on the matter. Mayor Sartor declined the request.

At this time, Mayor Sartor made a Point of Personal Privilege. "The City of Jonesboro has had events and collected sponsorships for years, and long before I became Mayor. The only difference here with the questioning is that I'm Mayor and it's Juneteenth. Not once has anyone sat in this seat and been questioned about sponsorships they solicited for an event. The City said, I'm only going to give you half the funds and they expected me to do Juneteenth with half." What they did not calculate is that I would go find the additional funding to provide an event that I wanted for my community. What the City has in place is an Ethics Committee. If anyone believes that there's been any wrongdoing, particularly as it relates to finances, they

can file an ethics complaint. From there, our Ethics Committee will convene. They will do their investigation and will render their report. This has to do with dignity and respect that I will hold and maintain in this position that you refuse to render to me. However, you did not put the same scrutiny on other events. We had sponsorships for St. Patrick's Day, Kentucky Derby, and concert series and no one said anything about it."

City Attorney Dreyer went over Robert Rules of Orders #47, Section 46-48.

E. Council to discuss the solicitation of sponsors.

Mayor Sartor said she would allow discussions, but not questioning.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick asked if the sponsorships were filtered through the DDA or the City of Jonesboro. She asked why was the funds not redirected to the DDA during the time it was collected in March, April, May, and June? Mayor Sartor shared that the individual who served as the Main Street Director had to see about an immediate family member with a terminal illness that eventually passed away. Therefore, the Director left after the Juneteenth event for a few weeks.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick stated, "the only people that can give direction for money to be transferred out of our account and into any other account would be the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem, and the Finance Director." Mayor Sartor told Mayor Pro-Tem Messick that she could file an ethics complaint.

F. Council to discuss the use of funds by each entity.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick stated that Council was presented with a limited number of invoices for both Juneteenth and July 3rd events. She expressed concerns regarding the amounts that were actually spent verses the amounts that were presented to Council. Mayor Sartor told Mayor Pro-Tem Messick that she could file an ethics complaint.

A motion was made for an investigation of the recent events and allegations against Mayor Sartor, stating your actions do not align with the legal and ethical standards expected of public officers as set forth in the Jonesboro City Charter, the Rules of Procedures, and the laws of the State of Georgia.

Mayor Sartor told Councilmember D. Dixon to file it with the Ethics Committee. In order for an investigation hearing to occur, it must first go through the Ethics Committee. City Attorney Dreyer said he will find out the process.

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

Mayor Sartor called the vote:

- Councilmember Powell: Ayes
- Mayor Pro-Tem Messick: Ayes
- Councilmember D. Dixon: Ayes
- Councilmember Miller: Ayes
- Councilmember Lester: Ayes
- Councilmember A. Dixon: Ayes

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation, real estate, and personnel matter(s).

Councilmember A. Dixon made a motion to move past executive session.

A second to the motion was not mentioned or captured.

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

None

At this time, Mayor Pro-Tem Messick made a motion to request an outside investigation on the allegations made against the Mayor.

A second to the motion was not mentioned or captured.

Mayor Sartor asked what were the allegations and she read the following:

- Motion to investigate recent events and allegations against Mayor Sartor, stating your actions do not align with the legal and ethical standards expected of public officers as set forth in the Jonesboro City Charter, the Rules of Procedures, and the laws of the State of Georgia.

Mayor Sartor asked for clarification of recent events and allegations.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick made a motion that the City Council have a majority vote on the investigator to be hired.

A second to the motion was not mentioned or captured.

Mayor Sartor said no, because she is being asked questions whereas Mayor Pro-Tem Messick could have picked up the phone and asked her.

Councilmember Miller asked if the discussion could be revisited openly and that she believed the matter could be cleared. Mayor Sartor declined, explaining that the questions being raised should have been addressed directly by contacting her on the phone.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

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

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Pat Daniel, Assistant City Clerk

Typed by Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk