CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

JULY 14, 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 at 6:06 p.m. by Mayor Pro-Tem Messick.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by City Clerk Jewett.

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

III. INVOCATION

Invocation by Pastor Sokhom Kim of First Baptist Jonesboro.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Council to consider approval and adoption of the amended Agenda.

The following items were added to the Agenda:

- Old Business Item D. - Internship Program
- New Business Item A. - Council to consider approval of a street closure on Main Street (between Pine Circle and Spring Street) regarding the Cigar Parlour's Annual Block Party Celebration on August 2, 2025 (Special Event Permit Application #: SE-26-25).
- New Business Item B. - Finance Consultant - Council to consider approval of Proposal #2025-A between the City of Jonesboro, Georgia and Journey Accounting and Tax Service Consulting, LLC (JATAXS).
- New Business Item C. – Council to discuss National Day of Service (September 11, 2025).

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

VI. MAYOR'S PRESENTATION

- JustServe Award Presentation by Stacy Johnson.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

None

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

- Marisol Avitia (JYCG) – Spoke regarding Jonesboro's Internship Program

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

A. Public Hearing regarding Alcohol Business Application #25-ALC-005 to provide complimentary beer, wine, and distilled spirits at 8564 Tara Blvd., Suite C., Jonesboro, Georgia 30236. The legal business name is EZ Nails Bar, LLC d/b/a EZ Nails Bar. Steve Thanh Thach has requested to be the License Representative.

Public Hearing Opened

No one came forth to speak.

Public Hearing Closed

Council to consider approval of the above-mentioned request for Alcohol Business Application #25-ALC-005.

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

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Council to consider approval of the June 2, 2025 Work Session Minutes.

RESULT: **Approved with noted corrections to the spelling of Commissioner Alaina Reaves' name. (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember D. Dixon**

B. Council to consider approval of the June 9, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

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

XI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Council to consider approval of the CDBG Subrecipient Agreement regarding Lee Street Park Improvements (HUD Project Grant #: B-2023-UC-13-005. Federal PY 23 in the amount of $100,000.00 and Federal PY 22 in the amount of $10,904.80)

B. Council to consider approval and adoption of Resolution 2025-006, which proposes adding language outlining the 48-hour Response Rule to the Rules of Procedures for Elected Officials (not to include weekends for City staff and Elected Officials).

RESULT: **Approved (Consent Agenda - Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Councilmember Miller**

SECONDER: Councilmember A. Dixon

XII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Council to consider approval of a transitional financial support service, as recommended by Plante Moran, to provide assistance to the Finance Department. Additionally, the Council to authorize payment for the corresponding service invoice.

The item was added to Old Business for 08/04/25 Work Session.

B. Council to consider approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement between Clayton County and the City of Jonesboro, Georgia for the Provision of Election Services related to the 2025 Municipal General Election, at a cost of $7,151.63.

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

Discussion – Mayor Pro-Tem Messick clarified the full cost of the election and that the City will not utilize The City Center as an early voting site since Clayton County will be administering the entire election.

A motion was made to allocate up to $4,000.00 to notify residents that Clayton County will oversee the City's 2025 Municipal General Election. These funds will be used for communication and marketing efforts related to the upcoming November election.

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

C. Council to consider approval of a part-time communication/media position.

RESULT: Tabled until the City's financial situation allows for appropriate funding. (Vote was unanimous)
MOVER: Mayor Pro-Tem Messick
SECONDER: Councilmember D. Dixon

D. Council to discuss the Internship Program.

In regard to the summer interns, Councilmember A. Dixon will supervise one intern of his choice regarding Council engagement or initiatives, and the second intern will be utilized amongst City Hall (between departments and at various events).

In regard to the fall interns, there will be three (3) interns. Council can decide later on how to utilize the three (3) interns at that time. For example: One at City Hall, one for general purposes, and one for Council).

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Council to consider approval of a street closure on Main Street (between Pine Circle and Spring Street) regarding the Cigar Parlour's Annual Block Party Celebration - August 2, 2025 (Special Event Permit Application #: SE-26-25). The hours are 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The street closure will be from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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

B. Council to consider approval of Proposal #2025-A between the City of Jonesboro, Georgia and JATAXS Consulting, LLC (Journey Accounting and Tax Service Consulting, LLC) to perform financial services on a part-time bases with obligated days on campus, at a minimum of 35 hours per week, for two months in order to push the City forward.

Mayor Sartor introduced Karen Slaton-Dixon of JATAXS Consulting, LLC to the Council.

Ms. Karen Slaton-Dixon provided a brief summary of her professional background and addressed the status of the bank reconciliations. She noted that completion of bank reconciliations for fiscal years 2023 and 2024 is a prerequisite for initiating the audit process. As of today, she has finalized reconciliations through the end of 2024. Tomorrow, she will start on the pool cash account, which is the City's most critical account requiring reconciliation. The months of January and February 2024 are already completed, and she plans to continue with reconciliations for March through December 2024. Once this work is done, the City will be prepared to proceed with an audit.

Ms. Slaton-Dixon shared that she and the Mayor had previously discussed the possibility of engaging an auditor on an emergency basis to support the City through fiscal years 2023 and 2024. Following that, the plan would be to initiate a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process to secure a long-term auditing partner, ensuring the City's financial records are fully updated. She noted that her work hours range from 20-35 hours (minimal) per week. Additionally, she expressed her commitment to training the existing finance staff (Mrs. Mungin) on procedures required to maintain operations, ensuring continuity and reducing the risk of institutional knowledge loss.

Councilmember A. Dixon told Ms. Slaton-Dixon that he appreciated the progress that has been made. He inquired about the anticipated completion timeline for the project. In response, Ms. Slaton-Dixon estimated that the process would take approximately two months, noting that the primary area of focus is the reconciliation of the pool cash account.

Lastly, Ms. Slaton-Dixon spoke about her experience with Tyler software and how she was able to resolve an issue the City was experiencing with the software. She also explained the pool cash process.

At this time, Councilmember Lester inquired about the services that Plante Moran had offered and if JATAXS Consulting, LLC would be replacing Plante Moran for this specific assignment. Mayor Sartor said she was not sure if Plante Moran was relying on the City to pay Tyler to get through the ongoing software issue that the City was experiencing. Therefore, she reached out to Karen Slaton-Dixon for assistance in addressing the Tyler software problem. Mayor Sartor stated, "we could reach out to Plante Moran at any point or entertain them both." However, "the City needs to get through the pool cash account as quickly as possible."

City Attorney Dreyer said the month-by-month transaction verification and ordering has to be done and this is probably a more cost-effective way to do it, but ultimately they'll complement each other. Councilmember Lester said that it is fine as long as they can get the forensic audit done and get everything back up to par to where they know what is coming in and going out and what department it is coming from would be the major goal.

Mayor Pro-Tem Messick inquired whether a budget amendment would be necessary since this is an actual contract and not an expense that was line itemed in the budget. In response, Mayor Sartor indicated that compensation could initially be drawn from Professional Services. She added that the City would revisit the need for budget amendments during the month of August. City Attorney Dreyer said it would be ideal to do this in August as long as the Council approves this.

Mayor Sartor stated that Ms. Slaton-Dixon is open to conducting a training session or participating in a Special Called Meeting to provide a clear and transparent overview of the City's current financial position, as well as to outline strategies for improvement and future progress.

Mayor Sartor spoke to Council about having a Special Called Meeting to discuss the budget. Also, she asked Council if they were ready to discuss it now. Councilmember A. Dixon said he was okay with having a Special Called Meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Messick said she was okay with having more time to review the information that City Attorney Dreyer provided. Mayor Sartor said she would get back with Council to schedule a Special Called Meeting to discuss the budget.

RESULT: **Approved to enter into contract with JATAXS Consulting Services, LLC (Vote was unanimous)**
MOVER: **Mayor Pro-Tem Messick**
SECONDER: **Councilmember A. Dixon**

Point of Personal Privilege by Mayor Sartor regarding the Forensic Audit.

C. Discussion regarding National Day of Service on 9/11/25.

Mayor Sartor led the discussion. National Day of Service is being recognized all over the Country. Therefore, organizations and governments are being asked to provide a day of service. Mayor Sartor spoke with Habitat for Humanity, and she would like this to be a Give-Day where Council, staff, and volunteers can participate. She is looking to close City Hall during this time (full or half day) so that we can go out and serve with Habitat for Humanity. The service project is located in Stockbridge, Georgia. Councilmember Miller said this is a wonderful service project. Court would remain open if there is a court session.

XIV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

A. Economic Development Report by Downtown Main Street Manager

Andrew Simpson, Downtown Development Manager was not present.

Mayor Sartor shared that Ms. Akuta (Economic Development Manager) would be providing the Economic Development Report starting in August, and Mr. Simpson would be providing the Downtown Development Report.

XV. REPORT OF CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

Comments by Mayor Pro-Tem Messick:

- None

Comments by Councilmember D. Dixon:

- None

Comments by Councilmember Powell:

- None

Comments by Councilmember Miller:

- Expressed appreciation to staff and interns for their valuable contributions to the City.
- Thanked all the residents that came to the meeting tonight.
- Spoke regarding the concession stand being temporarily closed due to park repairs.

Comments by Councilmember Lester

- Thanked employees for their due diligence and the police department for their quick response. Hope everyone has a good week.

Comments by Councilmember A. Dixon

- Thanked those who joined the meeting online and in person.
- Thanked the City of Jonesboro for allowing Council to attend the GMA Convention. This year's theme was Positive Leadership.
- JYCG Update – Completed their first onboarding last month with 100% response rate. Thanked Mayor and Council for allowing the youth to grow in a space within their own communities. Thanked staff for assisting with the onboarding process which will continue next Monday at the City Center.
- Thanked Mayor and Shelby for the Newsletter updates and look forward to utilizing the services provided.
- On behalf of JYCG Mayor, Danielle Avitia thanked everyone for attending Sundown Cinema which was an amazing experience. Hope to see everyone on July 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Green (located behind Nouveau) for the next film. Welcomed all families to come out and participate.

XVI. REPORT OF MAYOR

- Thanked Councilmember A. Dixon for the Sundown Cinema.
- Economic Inclusion Grant – Thanked Faith Akuta for working on the grant.
- July 27, 2025 – Annual Back to School Event from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Thanked everyone for their assistance.
- August 5, 2025 – National Night Out – Chief Cato is planning the event.
- Thanked Shelby for working with Councilmember Miller and A. Dixon – Met with a company that does booklet-style newsletters. Looking forward to kicking it off through them about 2-3 times per year at no expense to the City, except for postage. They will work on getting local sponsorship as well.
- September 11, 2025 - National Day of Service
- Public Works building (100 Gloria Drive) – Waiting for the steel to come in.
- November 19-22, 2025 - National League of Cities – City Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah
- July 9-13, 2025 – Attended Local Progress National Convening in Chicago, IL.
- The Atlanta Regional Commission announced on July 8, 2025 that 49 leaders from metro Atlanta's public, private, and nonprofit sectors have been selected to participate in the 2025 class of the Regional Leadership Institute (RLI). Congrats to Mayor Sartor for being selected. RLI immerses participants in key issues facing the Atlanta region, such as housing affordability, transit, and transportation planning, economic development, and workforce development.
- Expressed appreciation to staff for their continued dedication and contributions toward maintaining the effective operations of the City.

XVII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.

At 7:19 p.m., a motion was made to enter into Executive Session.

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

At 7:40 p.m., a motion was made to reconvene the Regular Council Meeting.

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

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

Council to consider approval to hire Donnette Cannady as the City's Finance Director at a salary of $125.000.00.

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

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

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

Dr. Donya L. Sartor, Mayor

Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk