

FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget—Highlights
Public Hearing is on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
in the City Auditorium

This memo will summarize budget highlights. The budget totals for each City department are on the one-page Budget Summary. The City's budget, as presented, includes the funds for the General Fund, the Water/Sewer Fund, the Gas Fund, and the Solid Waste/Garbage Fund. The proposed budget is being reviewed by the City Council, with a Public Hearing scheduled for Tues., June 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Auditorium.

The proposed FY 2025/26 budget includes the following benefits for employees:

- A **3.2%** proposed Cost-of-Living increase for all full-time and part-time employees. The City has 49 full-time employees and approximately 14 part-time employees.
- The attached budget absorbs the cost increase in health insurance premiums for those employees who receive health, dental and vision insurance from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.
- The budget continues longevity, merit, certification, and college degree benefits for employees. Longevity benefits are a stipend awarded to employees on their work anniversaries, while merit, certification and college degree benefits are actual pay adjustments for employees.

Capital and equipment needs are included, such as the lease-purchase of two police cars, two sets of firefighter turn-out gear, and funds to finance the upgrade of the City's natural gas meters. Much of the City's capital needs are financed through the SPLOST fund, but there are some capital items paid for through the General Fund

The budget draft includes revenue/expenditure comparisons that are noted at the end of each of the four major City funds.

The millage rate for property taxes is proposed to remain at **10.875** mills.

The Railroad equipment revenue line item has been combined with the Franchise Fee line item.

There is an increase under Airport Expenditures under grant matching because \$22,300 is budgeted for the City's first (1st) year contribution to the Ga. DOT T-Hanger grant, which would finance the Cochran Municipal Airport with another 10-unit T-Hanger for pilots.

Proposed Rate Adjustments/Increases

The budget assumes a **2.5%** increase in water/sewer fees, a **5%** increase in solid waste/garbage rates, an increase of **\$1.00** on the natural gas base charge and **\$1.00** per MCF unit used. Also proposed is an increase in the Fire Fee of **\$3.50** per month per resident, and an increase of **\$2.00** per month in the Stormwater Fee. The fire and stormwater fees are proposed for a fifty (50%) per cent adjustment to bring them in line with surrounding communities. There has been discussion about eventually placing these fees on annual property tax bills, rather than monthly utility bills.