



Draft Minutes

October 21, 2025

Cochran City Council

Special Called 6:00 PM

City Auditorium, 102 N Second Street, Cochran, GA 31014

City Council

City Staff

Billy Yeomans, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Trecia Gardner Council Member (District 1, Post 1)	Tiffany Lampp, Interim City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member (District 1, Post 2)	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Carla Coley, Council Member (District 2 Post 1)	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member (District 2, Post 2)	
Dianne, Lester Council Member (District 3, Post 1)	
Shane Savant, Council Member (District 3, Post 2)	

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the City of Cochran Mayor and Council was called to order at 6:04PM by the mayor.

Invocation

The meeting opened with a prayer by Councilman Shane Savant asking for guidance and wisdom in making decisions that benefit the citizens of Cochran. The invocation expressed gratitude for the responsibility entrusted to the council and requested protection and direction during the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chief Wilcher led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Approval of Agenda

The mayor asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda. Councilmember Savant requested to add an agenda item to discuss a Resolution to Contract Renewal before the renewal decisions. The motion to add the item was made by Councilmember Savant, seconded by Councilmember Coley, and approved unanimously. A motion to accept the amended agenda was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Executive Session

The mayor requested a motion to enter Executive Session. Council agreed to move to the conference room to conduct the session in a setting conducive to discussion. Attendees were informed they could remain in the auditorium while the council met in the conference room.

City Manager Contract Renewal Discussion

The mayor called for a motion regarding the extension of the City Manager's contract. A motion was made by Councilmember Ates to vote on the extension of the City Manager's contract. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Tedders.

Council Discussion

Councilmembers discussed the City Manager's performance, oversight, and accountability. Key points included:

- Councilmember Savant expressed concerns about decision-making processes and oversight related to recent issues such as the property tax matter, annexation procedures, variance hearings, and delays in project approvals.
- Councilmember Coley echoed with similar concerns, mentioning morale issues within City Hall, delays in addressing citizen requests, and the lack of an infrastructure improvement plan, particularly regarding the city's water system.
- Councilmember Lester noted the importance of accountability and setting clear performance expectations, emphasizing that future decisions should align with measurable progress.
- Councilmember Ates discussed the council's responsibility as the City Manager's supervisor, emphasizing the need for documented performance reviews and written records in the personnel file.
- Councilmember Ates added that while documentation exists through email correspondence, it has not been properly recorded in the personnel file.
- Councilmember Savant commented that honesty and accuracy in communication are vital to effective management and decision-making, stating that "we can coach performance, but we can't coach honesty."

Vote on Contract Renewal

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to extend the City Manager's contract for one year.

Councilmember	Vote
Ates	Yes
Coley	No
Gardner	Yes
Lester	No
Savant	No
Tedders	No

Result: 2 Yes (Ates, Gardner), 4 No (Coley, Lester, Savant, Tedders).

Per the City Charter requirement of a supermajority vote (five votes required for non-renewal), the motion passed to extend the City Manager's contract for one year.

Post-Vote Remarks

Councilmembers emphasized this decision should serve as a “wake-up call” for improved management, transparency, and accountability at City Hall. Members requested that the City Manager take corrective action to address staff morale, communication gaps, and responsiveness to council directives and public needs. The mayor noted that council members must also take an active role in communication and supervision rather than addressing issues publicly or on social media.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm
