



## Draft Minutes

November 6, 2025

Cochran City Council

Regular Session 7:00 PM

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

### City Council

### City Staff

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

## 1. Call to Order and Invocation

The Post-Agenda Meeting of the Cochran City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Billy Yeomans.

Council Member Councilman Savant led the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Diane Councilwoman Lester.

A quorum was established. All the members were present.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

The following minutes were reviewed and approved individually:

- **October 7, 2025** – Special Called Meeting (Executive Session Only)  
*Motion by Councilman Tedders, second by Councilwoman Coley. Approved unanimously.*
- **October 9, 2025** – Special Called Meeting (Appointment of Interim Clerk/Election Superintendent)  
*Motion by Councilman Tedders, second by Councilwoman Coley. Approved unanimously.*

- **October 14, 2025** – Regular Meeting  
*Motion by Councilman Tedders, second by Councilman Ates. Approved unanimously.*
  - **October 21, 2025** – Special Called Meeting  
*Tabled pending legal clarification from City Attorney.*
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### **3. Adoption of Agenda**

Amendments were made to include:

1. Discussion of Park Maintenance Contract including City Facilities.
2. Discussion of paving the rear Municipal Building parking lot.
3. Discussion of potential city donations to nonprofits addressing food insecurity during the federal shutdown.

*Motion by Councilwoman Coley, second by Councilman Savant to add items. Approved unanimously.*

*Motion by Councilman Ates, second by Councilman Savant to adopt agenda as amended. Approved unanimously.*

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### **4. Public Comments**

**Ms. Mickie Harbin** addressed the Council on behalf of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Chamber of Commerce.

She provided the following :

- The upcoming stakeholder event, downtown beautification efforts, and holiday lighting.
- Small Business Saturday on November 29 and Christmas events in December.
- Bingo fundraisers support food drives and community initiatives.

Mayor Yeomans noted the free food truck event on November 14 at the State Bank parking lot, sponsored by State Bank.

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### **5. Public Hearing – 2025 Millage Rate**

A public hearing was held at **7:13 p.m.** on the proposed rollback of the millage rate from **10.875 to 10.727 mills**.

No public comments were received.

The hearing closed at **7:17 p.m.**

*Motion by Council Member Councilman Savant, second by Councilman Ates to adopt the rollback millage rate of 10.727.  
Approved unanimously.*

City Manager Newbern noted that tax bills are expected to be issued in **December**, with a due date in **early February 2026**.

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## **6. Solid Waste Contract Discussion**

The council discussed bids from **Amwaste** and **Ryland Environmental** for a three-year solid waste services contract.

Key discussion points included:

- Inconsistent bid comparisons and unclear service frequency.
- Desire for clear, uniform specifications and side-by-side rate analysis.
- Council requested the City Manager to draft a service specification sheet comparing current waste service, vendor proposals, and customer billing.

*Motion by Councilman Ates, second by Councilman Savant, to hold a work session to determine service expectations before rebidding.  
Approved unanimously.*

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## **7. Council Retreat**

The council reviewed proposed Councilman Ates and agenda for the **2025 Council Retreat** (tentatively February).

Topics will include council roles, goal setting, consensus building, and strategic planning. A facilitator and location are to be finalized.

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## **8. Appointment – Industrial Development Authority**

Mayor Yeomans recommended Mr. Brian Lucas for appointment to the Cochran Industrial Development Authority for a term November 18, 2025 – November 18, 2027.

*Motion by Councilman Tedders, second by Councilman Ates. Approved unanimously.*

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## **9. Park Maintenance & Landscaping**

The City Manager presented a draft maintenance proposal for Cochran Community Park and additional city facilities.

Council discussed expanding to include edging, trimming, irrigation checks, and seasonal color at four locations:

- Municipal Building
- City Hall
- Community House
- Peyton Williams Building

Staff authorized to seek bids with updated specifications.

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## **10.Municipal Parking Lot Paving**

Public Works Director Willie Farrow discussed paving the rear municipal building parking lot and coordinating with the County to potentially include adjacent areas for cost efficiency. Quotes are being sought for inclusion with upcoming LMIG/TIA work.

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## **11.Food Insecurity Support Discussion**

Council Member Cody proposed a \$1,000 donation each to four local nonprofits assisting families during the federal shutdown:

- First Baptist Church
- Faith Temple
- Cochran Cares
- Willing Hands

City Manager to confirm legality with City Attorney and identify funds from the General Fund contingency.

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## **City Manager's Report**

- Letter of appreciation to Citizens Bank for donations to the Fire and Police Departments.
- Commendation to staff for election support and upcoming holiday events.
- Update on CDBG grant (\$996,080) and housing program.
- Upcoming DCA & GICH workshop in Savannah (Nov. 16–20).
- Announcement: Sign Ordinance variance hearing on December 9, 2025, for new convenience store signage.
- Reminder: National Night Out on November 22, 2025.

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## Council Comments

- **Councilwoman Coley:** Encouraged food donations and congratulated newly elected officials.
- **Councilwoman Lester:** Thanked voters for re-election and support.
- **Councilman Savant:** Congratulated the Bleckley County Royals on hosting the first round of state playoffs.
- **Mayor Yeomans:** Reminded citizens of the **Veterans Day Program on November 11 at 10:00 a.m.**, encouraged safety with heaters, and shared a motivational reading.

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## City Clerk's Comments

Interim City Clerk Tiffany Lampp invited Council to participate in the Christmas Parade on December 5<sup>th</sup> and noted she is arranging golf carts or classic cars for participants.  
Reminder: Cities United Conference registration is upcoming.

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## Executive Session

*Motion by Councilman Tedders, second by Councilman Savant to enter Executive Session for personnel and legal discussion.*

Approved unanimously at **8:24 p.m.**

Council reconvened in regular session following discussion.

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## Return to Regular Session

A motion was made by Council Member Councilman Ates and seconded by Council Member Councilwoman Gardner to return to Regular Session.

Motion carried unanimously.

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## Discussion: Food Insecurity Relief Funding

Council discussed the possibility of providing financial assistance to local non-profit organizations currently distributing food to residents experiencing food insecurity due to the federal SNAP benefit interruption.

City Attorney Jim Elliott advised that, under the Georgia Constitution, municipalities may provide funds for public health services, and nutrition qualifies under this provision. Therefore, such donations are permissible provided the organizations are properly recognized 501(c)(3) entities.

Council Member Carla Councilwoman Coley identified the four organizations currently collecting and distributing food donations:

- **Faith Temple**
- **First Baptist Church**
- **Willing Hands**
- **Cochran Cares**

City Manager Richard Newbern recommended confirming 501(c)(3) documentation, especially for the newly formed Cochran Cares group. The council agreed that verification should be obtained from all four organizations for record purposes.

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## **Council Motion**

Motion: Council Member Councilwoman Coley made a motion to donate \$1,000 to each of the four qualifying non-profit organizations (Faith Temple, First Baptist Church, Willing Hands, and Cochran Cares) for the purpose of purchasing and distributing food to residents facing food insecurity.

Funds will be allocated from the General Fund – Contingency Account.

Second: Council Member Councilman Savant.

Vote: Unanimous approval.

Attorney Elliott will draft a simple contract between the City and each organization to ensure that funds are strictly used for food donation purposes. The draft will be reviewed by the City Manager prior to execution.

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## **Adjournment**

With no further business, Councilwoman Lester made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Savant.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.