



## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**January 14, 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
VACANT (District 1, Post 1)	Candace Summerall, 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)	
VACANT (District 3, Post 1)	
Shane Savant, Council Member (District 3, Post 2)	

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Billy Yeomans called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

#### **II. INVOCATION Led by Ken Land**

#### **III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Melissa Barker**

#### **IV. ATTENDANCE**

Mayor confirmed quorum present with four council members in attendance.

#### **V. ADOPT AGENDA/MINUTES**

##### **A. Minutes**

Motion by Council Member Ates to adopt the minutes from December 10, 2024. Second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

##### **B. Agenda**

Motion by Council Member Savant to add agenda item #11 regarding the city park and infrastructure project bid amount. Second by Council Member Ates. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve amended agenda carried unanimously.

## VI. AGENDA ITEMS

### 1. Election of Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Yeomans read Section 2.34 of the city charter regarding election of mayor pro tem.

Council Member Savant nominated Council Member Gary Ates. Motion to close nominations by Council Member Savant, second by Council Member Coley. Nominations closed unanimously.

Council Member Ates elected unanimously as mayor pro tem for 2025.

### 2. FY2023/24 Audit Presentation

Greg Chapman of Nichols Cauley Accounting Firm presented audit findings:

Key findings:

- Unmodified (clean) opinion rendered
- Audit submitted timely to Department of Law
- Net change in fund balance: \$1,924,818
- Significant increase attributed to ARPA funds
- Full management cooperation received
- No disagreements on accounting matters
- Maintained independence throughout

Capital investments detailed:

- \$931,000 in public safety/public works
- \$615,000 in infrastructure
- \$57,000 in water/gas equipment

Extended discussion included:

- Council Member Savant questioned fire truck expenditure accounting
- Council Member Coley inquired about revenue recognition risks
- Discussion of uncollectible utility accounts (\$1M+)
- Questions about DBA exclusion from related organizations
- Clarification of audit sampling methodology

### 3. Industrial Development Authority Application

Discussion of IDA's One Georgia Fund application:

- Up to \$2M grant request
- \$200,000 IDA match
- March 28th application deadline
- Water/sewer infrastructure improvements for industrial park
- Falcon Design assisting with application

Council directed staff to prepare resolution of support for February 11th meeting.

### 4. CDBG Grant Administrator

Grant Review Committee recommended Gilbert & Associates based on evaluation of two proposals:

- Gilbert & Associates (Lawrenceville)
- Grant Specialist of Georgia (Americas)

Both firms proposed identical fees:

- \$6,500 grant preparation
- 7% administration fee
- \$3,200 project delivery

Council discussion included:

- Council Member Coley questioned why RFPs weren't advertised
- Council Member Savant inquired about bid processes and local options
- City Manager Newbern explained previous experience with local inspectors was unsuccessful
- Council Member Ates defended using proven successful contractor
- Discussion of professional services exemption from bidding requirements

Motion by Council Member Ates to hire Gilbert & Associates, second by Council Member Tedders. Vote resulted in tie (Council Members Ates and Tedders voting yes; Council Members Coley and Savant voting no). Mayor Yeomans broke tie with yes vote. Motion carried 3-2.

## 5. 2025 Budget Calendar

City Manager presented FY2025-26 budget calendar including:

- Department head meetings
- Preliminary revenue/expense discussions
- Capital budget preparation
- Required public hearings
- Target adoption date of June 10th

Motion by Council Member Coley to adopt budget calendar, second by Council Member Tedders. Motion carried unanimously.

## 6. 2025 Qualifying Fees

City Clerk presented qualifying fees:

- Council Districts (1,2,3): \$126
- Mayor: \$360

Discussion included confirmation these matched previous year's fees and requirement for February 1st notice.

Motion by Council Member Savant, seconded by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

## 7. Clean Up Day

Council considered setting Saturday, April 26, 2025 as Clean Up Day:

- Co-sponsored with Chamber of Commerce
- Includes Amnesty Week
- Date selected to avoid Easter weekend
- Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation supplies requested

Discussion included:

- Council Member Savant emphasized need for broader community participation
- Council Member Coley noted historical participation from high school groups

Motion by Council Member Savant, second by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

## 8. Home Inspections Contract

Considered Kevin Burnley proposal for CDBG housing application work write-ups:

- \$600 per house
- 12 houses total (\$7,200)
- Same rate as previous year

Discussion included:

- Council Member Savant inquired about number of bids received
- Council Member Coley questioned lack of RFP process
- City Manager Newbern explained:
  - Recommendation came from grants consultant
  - Burnley's previous successful work with city
  - His additional services including housing maintenance classes
  - History of unsuccessful applications with local inspectors
- Council Members Savant and Coley emphasized importance of considering local contractors

Motion by Council Member Ates, second by Council Member Tedders. Vote resulted in tie (Council Members Ates and Tedders voting yes; Council Members Coley and Savant voting no). Mayor Yeomans broke tie with yes vote. Motion carried 3-2.

## 9. Wastewater Treatment Plan

Considered D.A. Brown Environmental LLC proposal for \$5,500 to develop comprehensive nutrient optimization plan. City Manager explained:

- Required by NPDES permit
- Ensures EPD compliance for chemical treatment
- Sets parameters for plant operators
- Monitors thresholds for phosphorus and ammonia
- Six-month completion timeline
- Funded from wastewater professional services account

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 10. Soil Erosion Ordinance Amendment

Council considered amendments to comply with Georgia EPD requirements for Local Issuing Authority (LIA) status. City Attorney noted changes were primarily clerical improvements requested by EPD.

Motion by Council Member Tedders to amend the city's soil erosion sedimentation and pollution control ordinance, second by Council Member Coley. Motion carried unanimously.

#### 11. City Park Infrastructure Bid (Added Item)

Council addressed correction to previous bid amount:

- Original amount: \$1,409,672.12
- Corrected amount: \$1,439,672.12
- Difference due to contractor form typo
- Within original budget allocation

Motion by Council Member Savant, second by Council Member Ates. Motion carried unanimously.

#### VII. CITY MANAGER DISCUSSION/ITEMS/UPDATES

City Manager Newbern reported on:

- Roof, windows, and doors program progress
- Upcoming lottery for home repairs (6 houses per voting district)
- Georgia Technology Authority grant application (due January 20th)
- MLK Jr. parade scheduled January 20th at 4:30 PM
- Advertisement plans for home repair program

City Clerk Summerall provided update on:

- Water meter measurement issues identification and resolution

City Attorney Elliott had no updates.

## VIII. COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ITEMS

### Council Member Ates (District 1):

- Thanked District 1 citizens for participation
- Addressed concerns about CDBG grant implementation
- Announced District 1 meetings resuming next Thursday at 7 PM
- Emphasized need for council unity in helping citizens

### Council Member Coley (District 2):

- Discussed historical volunteer participation in clean-up events
- Expressed concerns about grant bidding processes
- Referenced past successful community involvement

### Council Member Savant (District 3):

- Encouraged community participation in Clean Up Day, noting previous year's turnout was primarily city employees and Middle Georgia girls softball team
- Advocated for local contracting opportunities:
  - Emphasized importance of being judicious with bids
  - Expressed preference for local contractors to maximize grant money going directly to projects
  - Questioned the practice of not seeking multiple bids for professional services

### Mayor Yeomans:

- Announced appointment to Region Water Planning Commission
- Emphasized heater safety during cold weather
- Thanked city employees
- Encouraged participation in upcoming elections

- Stressed importance of working together despite differences
- Emphasized community care and support

#### IX. ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

1. Next Work Session -- Tuesday, February 11, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
2. Next Regular Council Meeting - Tuesday, February 11, 2025 @ 7:00 PM
3. Council Retreat - February 6-7, 2025 @ 8:00 AM

#### X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

##### 1. Melissa Barker (Chamber of Commerce):

- Announced partnership with elementary school for family bingo night
- Announced few remaining tickets for Dueling Pianos
- Addressed follow-up on cleanup of purple paint from sidewalks

##### 2. Andy Ravleker (Seven Star Package):

- Requested extended operating hours (9 PM to 10 PM Monday-Thursday)
- Inquired about Sunday alcohol sales
- Updated on exterior building progress
- Discussed customer requests for extended hours

##### 3. Mary Pitts:

- Questioned park construction timeline
- Expressed concerns about park committee disbandment
- Discussed park design and budget decisions
- Advocated for continued community involvement in park planning



XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No matters requiring executive session.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Yeomans adjourned the meeting with closing remarks about community care and gratitude 8:39 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Candace Summerall, City Clerk



