

DRAFT MINUTES



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY AUDITORIUM
APRIL 14, 2026

The Honorable Carla Coley
Mayor

The Honorable Shane Savant, Mayor Pro Tem
District Three, Post Two

The Honorable Trecia Gardner
District One, Post One

The Honorable Gary Ates
District One, Post Two

The Honorable Rufus Veal
District Two, Post One

The Honorable Lonnie Tedders
District Two, Post Two

The Honorable Dianne Lester
District Three, Post One

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Cochran was called to order by Mayor Carla D. Coley. A reminder was given for all speakers to use the microphone for the benefit of those attending virtually.

Roll Call

Deputy City Clerk Tiffany Fowler called the roll.

Present:

Mayor Carla D. Coley
Councilmember Dianne Lester
Councilmember Shane Savant
Councilmember Rufus Veal
Councilmember Lonnie Tedders

Councilmember Trecia Gardner
Councilmember Gary Ates

A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Coley requested the removal of **Item #10 (Holt Consulting)** as it was not ready for consideration.

A motion was made by Councilmember Savant, seconded by Councilmember Lester to remove Item #10 from the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Tedders and seconded by Councilmember Savant to approve March 10, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Mr. Harold Peacock, 143 Pine Hill Drive, addressed Mayor and Council concerning their concerns with trash collection services. He stated that since October, trash in his area has not been consistently collected, resulting in significant accumulation. While a previous cleanup was conducted by city crews, he noted that it left behind additional debris.

Mr. Peacock further reported similar issues in other areas, including Roberts Drive, Lynn Place, Newton Place, and Lamar Drive. He expressed concern with current collection limits and requested consideration of contract changes to allow for full removal of accumulated trash.

Additionally, Mr. Peacock raised concerns about a washed-out culvert near his residence, posing a safety hazard for vehicles, including school buses. Temporary cones have been placed, but the issue remains unresolved.

Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Peacock and advised that staff would follow up with him regarding his concerns.

Department Head and Staff Reports

Fire Department

The Fire Department reported the following:

- Department is fully staffed with four firefighters per shift
 - Fire safety initiatives are expanding, including use of fire safety house
 - Increased collaboration with outside agencies
 - Recognition at the State Capitol for lifesaving efforts on Christmas morning
 - Construction underway on the second story of the training building
 - March call volume totaled 118 calls
 - Fire safety outreach included 146 adults and 87 children
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Police Department

The Police Department reported:

- New vehicles are in service
 - All officers are equipped with body cameras
 - Radar enforcement is in use
 - Staff remains slightly short, with interviews scheduled to fill vacancies
 - Overtime usage remains elevated
-

Public Works

Public Works provided updates including:

- Tire Amnesty Event approved, with collection locations and assistance available for elderly or disabled residents
 - Dumpsters will be placed at multiple locations throughout the city
 - Coordination underway to distribute informational flyers
-

Finance

The Finance Department reported:

- Overall financials are stable
- Police Department overtime is the primary variance

Administration

Administration reported:

- Interviews scheduled for the Accounts Payable position

Outside Agency Reports

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

- City accepted into the University of Georgia Communities Through the Arts program
- Discovery Day scheduled to initiate planning efforts
- Downtown Day scheduled for April 25, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM on 2nd Street

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber reported:

- Additional live music secured for Country Fest
- Upcoming events include:
 - Tippy Toes Dance Studio Ribbon Cutting (April __)
 - Bingo event
 - Hallman Recycling Ribbon Cutting (April 28)
 - Big Bear Paddle event ending in Cochran
 - Thought Classic (May 1)
- Planning underway for a July 4th Main Street celebration
- Welcomed new board members Amy Cook and Marcus Newsome

Agenda Items

1. Appointment of Interim City Clerk

Following the departure of the previous City Clerk:

Motion: Appoint Tiffany Fowler as Interim City Clerk

Second: Received

Vote: Passed unanimously

2. Georgia Cities Week Proclamation

- Activities include:
 - Tire Amnesty
 - Coffee with the Chiefs
 - Touch-a-Truck
 - Daily social media highlights
 - Children’s Coloring Contest

3. Chris Harris Proclamation

- Recognizing Chris Harris Day
- April 17, 2026.

4. Child Abuse Prevention & Sexual Assault Awareness Proclamation

Presentation by **Emily Berkshire**, Executive Director of Stepping Stone Child Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center

Highlights:

- Services for victims ages 0–100
- Forensic interviews and medical exams
- 24/7 crisis support
- Therapy and community resources
- Human trafficking victim support

Council expressed appreciation for the organization’s work.

5. Bible Reading Marathon Location

Motion: Approve municipal lawn as alternate location by Councilmember Savant

Second: by Councilmember Lester

Vote: Passed unanimously

6. Gas Authority Voting Delegate

Motion: Appoint Tiffany Fowler as Voting Delegate and Gary Ates as Alternate by Councilmember Savant

Second: by Councilmember Tedders

Vote: Passed unanimously

7. House Bill 1570 (Airport Authority)

Discussion included:

- Concern over allowing out-of-county board members
- Process concerns (lack of prior council approval)

Motion: Approve support of HB 1570 by Council Member Tedders 2nd by Councilmember Ates

Vote: Passed (split vote; Mayor broke tie)

Yes: Ates, Gardner, & Tedders No: Savant, Lester, and Veal

8. Additional Bank Signer

Motion: Appoint Dianne Lawson Lester as additional signer by Councilmember Savant

Second: Received by Councilmember Tedders

Vote: Passed unanimously

9. Deep South Payment (Police Department Work)

- Third-party review confirmed value of work
- Work completed without formal contract

Motion: Pay \$24,816.54 for completed work by Councilmember Ates

Second: by Councilmember Tedders

Vote: Passed unanimously

10. Sign Variance Requests (Cochran Beverage Outlet)

- Second monument sign
- LED digital sign (violated spacing ordinance)

Motion to deny sign variance by Councilmember Savant 2nd by Councilmember Councilmember Ates

Vote: Both motions passed to deny

11. City Manager Report

- Emergency generator repair: \$5,046.22
 - SPLOST purchases: water meters and hydrants
 - Ongoing development and infrastructure coordination
 - Roadwork and utility coordination updates
-

12. City Attorney Report

Upcoming agenda items:

- Property boundary clarifications (quitclaim deeds)
 - Road abandonment request (Colonial Road area)
-

13. Council Comments

Councilmembers:

- Welcomed Interim City Manager
 - Expressed appreciation for staff efforts
 - Encouraged unity, kindness, and continued progress
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14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.