

COCHRAN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

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MINUTES CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING JUNE 9, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Cochran City Council was held on June 9, 2026, in the City Auditorium, 102 N Second Street, Cochran, Georgia with the following present:

Carla Coley, Mayor

Trecia Gardner, Councilmember

Dianne Lester, Councilmember

Jim Elliott, City Attorney

Shane Savant, Mayor Pro Tempore

Gary Ates, Councilmember

Angela Redding, Interim City Manager

Bonnie Raffield, Interim City Clerk

Staff present: Police Chief Jeff Trawick, Fire Chief Brock Wilche, Willie Farrow, Public Works Director, and Danny Smith Code Enforcement Officer.

CALL TO ORDER: The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Carla Coley at 6:02 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Prayer was led by Mayor Pro Tem Shane Savant followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Present	Absent
Carla Coley	Mayor	√	
Shane Savant	Mayor Pro Tempore, District Three, Post Two	√	
Trecia Gardner	Councilwoman, District One, Post One	√	
Gary Ates	Councilman, District One, Post Two	√	
Rufus Veal	Councilman, District Two, Post One		√
Lonnie Tedders	Councilman, District Two, Post Two		√
Dianne Lester	Councilwoman, District Three, Post One	√	

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – June 9, 2026:

Councilman Ates made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Councilwoman Lester. The motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Mayor Coley requested consent approval for the minutes from the Work Session on May 7th, Regular Meeting on May 12th, and Called Meeting on May 26th.

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Mayor Pro Tem Savant made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Councilwoman Lester. The minutes carried unanimously.

City Attorney Jim Elliott advised that the Emergency Meeting Minutes should reflect the special circumstances for the meeting. Councilwoman Lester made a motion to amend the May 27th Emergency Meeting Minutes to include the special circumstances for the meeting, which was to address an important personnel matter and that proper notice of the emergency meeting was placed on the City's website and at the City Auditorium. Councilman Ates seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Ates made a motion to approve the amended emergency meeting minutes; seconded by Councilwoman Gardner. Motion carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Coley read the Juneteenth Proclamation, recognizing June 19th, 2026, as Juneteenth day in the City of Cochran. Representatives organizing the City's Juneteenth Celebration accepted the proclamation and thanked Mayor and Council for their continued support.

The committee announced:

- The Juneteenth Celebration will be held on **June 20, 2026**.
- Events will take place behind City Hall and inside the City Auditorium.
- Thirty-one vendors and several entertainment groups are scheduled to participate.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: - Council approved adding Public Comments to the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Savant made a motion to add public comment; seconded by Councilwoman Lester. Motion carried unanimously.

Evelyn Costa

Ms. Evelyn Costa, 273 Elizabeth Street, addressed Council regarding the City's alcohol ordinance. She requested consideration of a variance allowing a wine establishment to operate without the current food service requirement.

Mayor Coley advised that the request would be scheduled for discussion at an upcoming work session and requested Ms. Costa's contact information for follow-up.

Michael Chaudari

Mr. Michael Chaudari, 111 East Beech Street, submitted a variance request for Council's consideration.

Interim City Manager Angela Redding acknowledged receipt of the request and advised it would be reviewed during a future work session.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Fire Department

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Chief Brock Wilcher reported the following departmental updates:

- Turned in FEMA paperwork for reimbursement in response to the Brantley County Fire. Amount totaled \$17,634.51.
- Passed the annual Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training audit.
- Applying for a Mini Pumper.
- Back to issuing burn permits in the City but still must call the fire station to obtain a permit.
- Several employees obtained Hazmat Operations and Firefighter 2 State Certification.
- Call volume for June was a total of 103 calls.

Police Department

Chief Jeff Trawick reported on current Police Department operations and ongoing public safety initiatives.

There was a discussion regarding Animal Control expenses and staffing level for the Police Department.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Willie Farrow provided updates regarding departmental operations and ongoing maintenance projects including filling potholes, mowing right-of-way, maintaining storm drains etc.

There was a discussion regarding the flag display. There was a request to display the flags two weeks prior to and after the Fourth of July. A discussion was held regarding organizations who can assist with the flag display.

The project list for the LRA was approved.

Finance Department

The finance report included revenue summary by fund, expenditures as of May 31, 2026, and reports on special revenue funds.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES REPORT

DDA

Ken Land thanked the Mayor and Council for their support for Fourth of July events.

He reported on the three projects for the Connected Resilient Community (CRC) Program through the University of Georgia. The projects are:

- Downtown Safety – connectivity with other parts of the city

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- Downtown Charette
- Truck Traffic in the downtown area

IDA: No report.

Chamber of Commerce

Melissa Barker reported all Fourth of July activities are free.

Upcoming Events

- Second Saturday – Tres Hombres Band at the Courthouse along with Food Trucks
- Bingo – June 15th
- Juneteenth Celebration – June 20th
- Business After Hours – June 25th, 5:30 PM at A2 Studio

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Appoint Bonnie Raffield as Interim City Clerk.
Councilman Ates moved to appoint Bonnie Raffield as Interim City Clerk; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Savant. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Mayor Reappointment to the IDA
Reappointment – Adam Holloway, term expires July 18, 2026, 2-year appointment. This appointment does not need Council approval.
3. Mayor's Appointment/Reappointment to the Library Board
Reappointment – Sonja Rivers, term expires June 20, 2026, 4-year appointment
Appointment - Amy Lee, 4-year appointment
These appointments do not require approval by City Council.
4. Event Permit- Fourth of July Events
The Chamber of Commerce has requested to close Second Street from Dykes to Ash for this event on July 4, 2026. Chief Trawick informed the governing body that GDOT received the request this morning.
5. Event Permit – Juneteenth Celebration
Council approved the event permit for the Juneteenth Celebration.
6. Consider and Approve the Congressional Directed Spending Award from Senator Ossoff for the Municipal Building and the Required Match.

Council tabled this item until the grant amount awarded and match required could be confirmed.

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7. Consider and Approve proposed Changes to the Temporary Promotion Policy in the Personnel Handbook.

Mayor Pro Tem Savant made a motion to approve changes to the temporary promotion policy; seconded by Councilman Ates. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Consider and Approve the Proposed Employee Travel Policy.
Council considered the following amendments to the travel policy:

City Manager approval for all travel.

City Manager approval for any overnight stay less than fifty miles away.

Mayor Pro Tem Savant motion to approve the Employee Travel Policy with the amendments. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ates and carried unanimously.

9. Consider and Approve Per Diem for Mayor and Council.
Mayor Pro Tem Savant made a motion for Mayor and Council to follow GSA guidelines for travel. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lester and carried unanimously.
10. Consider and Approve Improvements at the Municipal Building and Requests from Downtown Business Owners and Patrons.
It was decided to obtain bids for the work at the Municipal Building and for Public Works to paint the railing downtown.
11. Consider and Approve the Work Detail Agreement with the Georgia Department of Corrections.
Councilman Gary Ates made a motion to accept the Work Detail Agreement with the Georgia Department of Corrections; seconded by Councilwoman Trecia Gardner. The motion carried unanimously.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: Interim City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

2026 CHIP Grant Award

The City of Cochran 2026 CHIP Grant Award is \$500,000. The grant term is September 1, 2026, through August 31, 2029.

Airport Authority Meeting

- Gail Martin, Airport Manager, received a request for a wedding at the airport in August 2026. She is awaiting additional information from the requestor.
- The T-Hanger project was overbid by \$120,000. I am waiting for an update from Holt Consulting regarding additional funds or scaling back the project.
- Hanger Lease Agreements will be sent to tenants upon approval by the City Attorney.

- Projected Airport Improvements
 - a. Vegetation Treatment (fence perimeter)
 - b. Front Office & Lounge Improvements
 - c. Community Hanger – Roof insulation
 - d. Hangar flooring – needs to be stripped, cracks filled in, and re-painted.
- Airport CD (Certificate of Deposit) – Renewed November 6th

City of Cochran CDAR Certificate

The \$1,000,000 CDAR certificate at Citizens Bank was renewed for another 3 month.

BUDGET

There are three credit card statements that need to be entered into the system. One is for administration. There is adequate financial data now to update the budget worksheets. I plan to send budget sheets no later than Monday and propose a schedule for budget meetings.

Bleckley County General Primary/Non-Partisan Runoff Election for Democratic and Republican Contests

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

ELECTION DATE: JUNE 16, 2026

DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL: JUNE 5, 2026

EARLY VOTING DATES: JUNE 8, 2026 - JUNE 12, 2026

HOURS: 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

NO SATURDAY VOTING FOR THE RUNOFF ELECTION

LOCATION FOR EARLY VOTING: BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION OFFICE - 106 E. CHERRY ST. (COURTHOUSE ANNEX)

ELECTION DAY LOCATION: JAYCEE BARN – 290 ASH ST.

ELECTION DAY HOURS: 7:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.

CONTACT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION OFFICE AT
478-934-3200 EXT. 8,

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Interim City Manager Redding included a list of meetings and events she attended during the month of May.

Interim City Manager Redding announced the next meeting of the Airport Authority Board is July 30th.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT: No report.

MAYOR/COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilwoman Gardner thanked all for their assistance with Dre Day.

Councilman Ates thanked Police Chief Jeff Trawick for his thirty (30) years of service to the city.

Councilwoman Lester thanked Police Chief Jeff Trawick for his service to the city.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): Mayor Coley requested a motion to enter Executive Session for personnel. Councilwoman Lester made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:36 PM personnel matters; seconded by Councilman Ates. The motion passed unanimously.

RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING: The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:45 PM

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Councilman Ates to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM; seconded by Councilwoman Gardner. The motion passed unanimously.