



DRAFT MINUTES
March 5, 2026
Cochran City Council
Work Session @ 6:00 PM

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

City Council

City Staff

Carla Coley, Mayor	Richard Newbern, City Manager
Trecia Gardner <i>(District 1, Post 1)</i>	Candace Summerall, City Clerk
Gary Ates, Council Member <i>(District 1, Post 2)</i>	Jim Elliott, City Attorney
Rufus Veal, Council Member <i>(District 2 Post 1)</i>	
Lonnie Tedders, Council Member <i>(District 2, Post 2)</i>	
Dianne Lester <i>(District 3, Post 1)</i>	
Shane Savant, Council Member <i>(District 3, Post 2)</i>	

I. Call to Order by the Mayor

Mayor Carla Coley called the March 5, 2026 Work Session of the Cochran City Council to order 6 pm

II. Invocation

Invocation was offered following agenda approval by Mickey Harbin

III. Attendance

Mayor Coley noted attendance and quorum was established. Council Member Rufus Veal was absent.

IV. Adopt Agenda

Agenda Modifications

Move agenda item 8, Discuss the Award of a Bid for the federally funded Willie Basby Park walking trail/playground/cooking grill, to item number 2.

Add agenda item 12, discussion and action regarding the executive search firm for the City Manager position.

Approve agenda as amended.

Motion: Made by Council Member Shane Savant

Second: Made by Council Member Lonnie Tedders

Vote: Unanimous approval

V. Agenda Items

1. Discussion of Public Hearing Sign Variance request from Bobby Patel

Mayor Coley reviewed the upcoming public hearing regarding Bobby Patel's request for variances related to a proposed second monument sign with a variable LED display at 182 E. Dykes Street, Suite A

2. Discuss the Award of a Bid for the federally funded Willie Basby Park walking trail/playground/cooking grill
James Jones reviewed the recommendation to award the project to Graham Studstill General Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$171,250

3. Discussion regarding Chamber of Commerce Commons Building tax relief request

Melissa Barker requested consideration of three years of City tax relief for the Commons Building,

4. Discussion of Engineering Services to support 2026 CDBG application

Mayor Coley reported that a committee consisting of Mayor Coley, Council Member Lonnie Tedders, and Council Member Shane Savant had reviewed the submitted proposals in accordance with the CDBG process. Council Member Tedders stated that, after evaluating and scoring the proposals, the committee recommended Falcon for engineering services associated with the 2026 CDBG application.

5. Discussion of Council Committees

Mayor Coley reviewed the proposed standing committee structure

6. Discussion of Colonial Road right-of-way

Mayor Coley reviewed the ongoing concerns related to Colonial Road, including uncertainty over ownership, repeated off-road use, drainage issues, and the presence of a gas line.

7. Discussion of moving a Part-time position in the Police Department to a Full-time position

Chief Jeff Trawick and the City Clerk discussed moving assistant court clerk Katherine Helms from part-time to full-time status.

8. Discussion of Budget Amendment for FY 2025/26

City Manager Richard Newbern presented proposed budget amendments for several line items

9. Discussion of Bids received for the landscaping maintenance at Cochran Community Park, Municipal Building, City Hall, Community House and the Peyton Williams Center

Council reviewed bids submitted by Dixie, Paulk, and Jones.

10. Discussion of quotes for adding lighting to the City Park

Council reviewed options for adding security lighting at the City Park,

11. Discussion of acceptance of Cybersecurity Grant Award from the GEMA State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program

Mayor Coley and City Manager Newbern reviewed the award of \$175,283 for cybersecurity improvements, with a required City match of \$43,820 for a total project cost of \$219,103

12. Discussion and action regarding executive search firm for the City Manager position

Council discussed proposals for an executive search firm for the City Manager position. Council Member Shane Savant made a motion to use Mercer Group at a base cost of \$16,500 plus additional costs not to exceed \$3,900, for a total maximum of \$20,400.

Motion: Made by Council Member Shane Savant

Second: Council Member Lonnie Tedders

Vote: Approved 4-1

VI. City Manager/City Clerk Discussion Items

VII. Mayor/Council Discussion Items

Council Members did not present additional discussion items. Mayor Coley advised Council that an item regarding closure of Second Street for Downtown Day on April 25, 2026 would be added to the next regular meeting agenda once departmental review of the application was completed.

VIII. Executive Session

Executive Session for personnel matters was requested following the work session 7:37 PM Council voted to recess for approximately five minutes before entering Executive Session in the chamber conference room.

Motion: Made by Council Member Shane Savant

Second: Council Member Lonnie Tedders

Vote: Unanimous approval

IX. Adjournment

Executive session ended and Adjourned at 8:59 PM

Motion: Made by Council Member Gary Ates

Second: Council Member Trecia Gardner

Vote: Unanimous approval

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Candace Summerall

City Clerk