

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Zack Thompson, Juli Hayes, Abigail Guzman, Barbara Brooks, Jon Elliott, Bob Norton
STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Abb Hayes, Alisa Grayson

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order and served as the presiding officer.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:

Keep Hall Beautiful

Executive Director Shanda Sexton stated 2025 was a year of change and growth. She provided a brief overview of staffing changes, educational events/programs, and cleanup efforts noting the amount of litter collected has decreased. She distributed a handout referencing the Green School Initiative which is a new program with focus on environmental education and improvement efforts. Awards received were also noted. They were requesting \$35,000 which is an increase of \$3,000 from the prior year.

There was an inquiry about funding from other local governments and the shortfall with corporate/business contributions.

DEPARTMENT ISSUES:

Resolution: FY2026 Local Road Assistance (LRA) Administration Grant

Senior Civil Engineer Corey Jones presented a resolution requesting authorization to accept funding in amount of \$597,000 for street resurfacing with a 0% local match requirement. The streets to be resurfaced were identified as portions of Marthasville Court, Lindsey Baker Court, Estate Drive, Broad Street, Race Street, McDonald Street, East Avenue, Armour Street, Amberleigh Trace, Old Flowery Branch Road, Laura Drive, and Green Street Circle. City Manager Bryan Lackey stated the Governor initiated the LRA grant, which is in addition to the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG), and is assessed annually.

Placed on the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

Resolution: Establishing Just Compensation for the CDBG Program and Authorizing Property Acquisition from Alvin Gibson

Neighborhood Development Manager Jessica Tullar presented a resolution to authorize the purchase of a third piece of property utilizing CDBG funds. She commented on the property for purchase noting the CDBG grant funding criteria needs have been met. The resolution establishes the just compensation based on an appraisal by a certified appraiser.

Placed on the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

CITY MANAGER ISSUES:

Resolution: Application Deadline for Midtown TAD

City Manager Bryan Lackey reminded Council of previous discussions to reopen the application process for the downtown/Midtown Tax Allocation District (TAD). The proposed resolution authorizes TAD applications (within the existing boundaries) and sets a deadline of December 31, 2026. Financial obligations will not extend past December 31, 2029.

Placed on the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

Resolution: Property Acquisition from Outer Banks, LLC

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated the proposed resolution authorizes the purchase of two lots across from the golf course. He briefly commented on the project plans to follow.

Placed on the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

MAYOR/COUNCIL ISSUES:

Mayor Thompson

Nominated Brett Fowler for appointment on the Gainesville-Hall County Development Authority.

Appointment placed on the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

CITY ATTORNEY ISSUES:

Resolution: Capstone Property Group, LLC Application Under the Georgia Tourism Development Act

City Attorney Abb Hayes stated the proposed resolution was related to the Capstone tourism development noting they are seeking a state sales tax rebate under the Georgia Tourism Development Act. A public hearing on the application is required. This also provides the city an opportunity to offer an endorsement for their effort.

Public Hearing scheduled for the May 5, 2026 Council Meeting

OTHER BUSINESS:

City Attorney Abb Hayes reported a resolution related to participation in an amicus brief for the City of Milton will be presented at Tuesday's Council Meeting.

RECESS: 9:23 AM

RECONVENE: 10:04 AM

COUNCIL TOUR: (Riverside Water Treatment Plant, 2120 Riverside Drive)

City Manager Bryan Lackey began the tour/presentation session with an outline of the scheduled presentations.

Director of Water Resources Linda MacGregor and Deputy Director of Water Resources Myron Bennett provided information about the facility and introduced Riverside WTP Manager Scott Allen (22 years) and Riverside WTP Assistant Manager Dalton Kight (8 years). A facility tour was conducted and ended at 11:19 AM.

PRESENTATIONS:

Department of Water Resources

Director of Water Resources Linda MacGregor and Deputy Director of Water Resources Myron Bennett presented the information supplemented with a power point and shared the following accomplishments and rate recaps:

- Operations challenge which is a national program conducted by the Water Environment Federation that included trainings and various competitions
- Ongoing projects at the Flat Creek Water Reclamation Facility, Riverside Water Treatment Plant and distribution systems
- Water capacity and demand
- Proposed updates to ensure capacity and regulatory compliance
- Summary of Council actions for the next steps

There was some discussion regarding rate proposals and options going forward.

Council Questions/Comments:

- *There was an inquiry about the life of the materials for the clearwell.*
- *There was an inquiry about the average annual capital budget outside of the major capital projects.*
- *There was an inquiry about newly imposed federal regulations and if they are budgeted for.*
- *There was an inquiry about factoring of inflation.*
- *There was an inquiry regarding fines for not meeting pretreatment regulations.*
- *There was a comment on group discussions with industries regarding costs.*

CMO/Communications

City Manager Bryan Lackey, Deputy City Manager Angela Sheppard, Public Relations Director Christina Santee-Moss and City Clerk Alisa Grayson presented information supplemented with a power point. City Manager Bryan Lackey provided an overview of the Organizational Chart and the Strategic Priorities. The following information was also shared:

- Accomplishments/Achievements:
 - Awards
 - Downtown of the Year Award
 - 2025 ULI Atlanta Awards for Excellence
 - Milken Institute's Best-Performing Cities Top 10 for Small Cities
 - Leader in Government Sites
 - Gainesville.org website
 - CivicSend SMS/text communication module
 - Implementation of DocAccess for document accessibility compliance
 - Various communities hosted and presentations made
 - Strategic priorities related to the following categories:
 - Economic Development
 - Spirit of Community
 - Stewardship
 - Culture of Safety
 - Regional Destination
 - Municipal and Special Elections
 - Boards/Committees Transition Project – Update
- Challenges & Opportunities:
 - ParkGVL
 - Top Milken Institute's 2026 Annual Rank of Best-Performing Cities
 - Ethics Report Filings

- Initiatives:
 - Education efforts through Public Relations
 - Future Midland Parking Deck
 - Crossroads Plaza
 - New Downtown Hotel
 - Highlands to Islands Trail project
 - Athens Street Corridor Improvements
 - East/west connector trail project and concept plans
 - Rec Center
 - 2027 Municipal Election

Council Questions/Comments:

- *There was an inquiry about the general process and signage for the paid parking.*
- *There was some discussion regarding requirements related to golf carts.*
- *There was a report about positive feedback received related to the paid parking.*
- *There was an inquiry about a downtown business counsel.*
- *There was an inquiry for clarification on citations.*
- *There was an inquiry regarding the strategic plan for moving forward with the Midland Parking Deck project and the specific location.*
- *There was an inquiry regarding the trail width.*

Financial Services

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry bragged on the Finance staff for all they do as it relates to processes and initiatives. He also commented on the City Auditors. The following information was shared supplemented with a power point:

- Accomplishments:
 - Implementation of GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) statements
 - Awarded the GFOA Triple Crown Winner for Award-Winning Financial Excellence
 - Changed NWS financial system to cloud-hosted to provide for effectiveness and efficiency
 - Offered a Microsoft Office 365 training program.
 - Highlights of the financial update to include the general fund property tax / TAVT revenue, local option sales tax revenue, franchise fee revenue, permits/zoning fee revenue, and occupational tax revenue
 - Investment benchmarks
 - Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds
 - Midtown TAD – Taxable Value
- Challenges / Opportunities:
 - Assigned rating status
 - Property Tax and Business License billing schedule
- Initiatives:
 - Property Tax software
 - New Business License software implemented

Mayor Thompson expressed appreciation for the implementation of the new business license software.

City Manager Bryan Lackey summarized some of the discussions for moving forward and preparation of the budget.

Council shared positive comments on the new structure/format for the meetings and noted they were in favor of continuing with this format moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT: 1:39 PM

/ag

Zack Thompson, Mayor

Alisa Grayson, City Clerk