

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Sam Couvillon, Zack Thompson, Juli Hayes, Abigail Guzman, Danny Dunagan
OFFICIALS ABSENT: Barbara Brooks
STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Abb Hayes, Alisa Grayson
STAFF ABSENT: Denise Jordan

Mayor Couvillon called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and served as the presiding officer.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:

Economic Development Council

Lanier Technical College President Tim McDonald commended Council for all their great work and for the public/private partnerships in Gainesville which is evident by its recognition as Milken Institutes top 10 rankings for the past few years. There are great economic opportunities here. He was proud of Gainesville-Hall County.

Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce (GHCC) President and Chief Executive Officer Tim Evans stated the Chamber had a great International VIP Tour last week. He commented on the public/private partnership and the program initiatives available in Gainesville. GHCC staff members Senior Project Manager Ryan Jackson, Vice President of Industry Development Nikki Chandler, Director of Vision 2030 Anna Hester, Marketing Manager Emily Pierce and Chief Financial Officer Mark VanTassel shared information on the various program activities as well as financial reports.

Council Member Juli Hayes commented on the Demographic Trends in Gainesville-Hall County presentation by Will Wright, Atlanta Regional Commission.

Chairman Glennis Barnes commented on having clean audits. Their funding request in the amount of \$185,000 remained the same as last year. He also commented on the transformation seen in the community and expressed appreciation for the city's partnership and support.

Council extended words of appreciation.

FY2026 Parks & Recreation Budget

Parks & Recreation Board Chair Brent Loggins thanked elected officials for their support and for all they do.

Parks & Recreation Director Kate Mattison used a power point presentation. In summary, the 100 Year Celebration and The Coop Grand Opening were significant accomplishments. The department's challenges were associated with rising cost which encouraged prioritizing capital projects. Growing pains was another challenge along with succession planning to prepare for staff approaching retirement. Initiatives included expanded programing, more special events, free lunch at summer programs and capital projects at Roper Park and Longwood Park. In closing, Mrs. Mattison presented the budget at a glance.

Upon inquiry, Mrs. Mattison provided the revenue projections for the Coop and anticipated it to be about \$500,000. Council expressed appreciation. Chairman Loggins closed by stating there is a lot going on under the park umbrella. He felt Gainesville was a great place.

DEPARTMENT ISSUES:

Public Hearing: Request from Aneesh Patel for a special use on a 1.92± acres tract located northwest of the intersection of Dawsonville Highway and Beechwood Boulevard, at the terminus of a private cul-de-sac (a/k/a 1181 Dawsonville Highway, NW), having a zoning of General Business (G-B). Ward Number: One. Tax Parcel Number(s): 00-115-002-085. Request: Extended stay hotel.

City Attorney Abb Hayes summarized the application noting there was no opposition at the Planning & Appeals Board meeting.

Public hearing advertised for April 1, 2025 Council Meeting Agenda

MAYOR/COUNCIL ISSUES:

Council Member Guzman shared a Housing Authority ex-officio report.

Mayor Couvillon congratulated Council Member Dunagan on the sale of his business.

CITY ATTORNEY ISSUES:

Resolution: Bonds Issuance for the Benefit of Brenau University, Inc.

City Attorney Abb Hayes stated the proposed resolution approves bonds for Brenau University. Attorney Tread Syfan provided a brief overview regarding the issuance of bonds and financing under the internal revenue code. A public hearing was held on March 12, 2025. There were no public comments. The next step was asking Council to adopt a resolution to approve the financing to the extent required by the Internal Revenue Code with no obligation of repayment by the city. This was a requirement to ensure the interest on the bonds will be tax exempt. The bonds will be issued in a principal amount of \$25,000,000. Funding above the refinance amount will be used to purchase the Featherbone Center and for renovation projects. They asked for adoption of the proposed resolution.

Placed on the April 1, 2025 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

Resolution: Authorization for Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and Redevelopment Authority Regarding Property Near Monroe Drive for New Fire Station

City Attorney Abb Hayes stated the proposed resolution authorized an agreement with the Redevelopment Authority on a waste management strategy and a fire station development.

Placed on the April 1, 2025 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

CITY CLERK ISSUES:

Georgia Municipal Association 2025 Convention

Deputy City Clerk Alisa Grayson reported registration for the convention was completed on Wednesday, March 26, 2025 noting travel packets will be distributed in June prior to the convention.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

City Attorney Hayes requested an Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.

Motion to close the meeting to enter an Executive Session to discuss real estate matters at 9:48 AM.

Motion made by Council Member Dunagan
Motion seconded by Council Member Thompson
Votes favoring the motion: Thompson, Hayes, Guzman, Dunagan
Absent: Brooks

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Motion to close the Executive Session at 10:08 AM.

Motion made by Council Member Thompson
Motion seconded by Council Member Hayes
Votes favoring the motion: Thompson, Hayes, Guzman, Dunagan
Absent: Brooks

OTHER BUSINESS:

Nonprofit Organization Budget Requests

There was discussion about the budget request from Elachee with specific emphasis on helping them through a difficult budget year. There was also discussion about budgeting for nonprofits in general, i.e., determining which nonprofit organizations to support. Mayor Couvillon felt Council should rely on decisions received at the staff level standpoint.

There was consensus for the City Manager to follow up with Council on all agency allocations.

Aviation Park

Upon inquiry, City Manager Bryan Lackey provided an update on the Aviation Park project noting they are evaluating some design changes. There was discussion about the budget for this project and the best marketable use for the property.

SPLOST

There was a brief conversation about the importance of SPLOST with comments indicating more emphasis should be placed on highlighting the paving projects.

Homelessness Issue

Mayor Couvillon reported a call from a storage unit owner expressing concerns about homelessness in the area of Dorsey Street.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:33 AM

/ag

W. Samuel Couvillon, Mayor

Alisa Grayson, City Clerk