

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Draft

Thursday, June 5, 2025

6:00 PM

**City Hall
110 Academy Street**

City Council

1. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by Mayor Grant and an invocation was given by Councilmember Johnson.

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.

Members Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Councilmember Farris Yawn
Councilmember Sandy McGrew
Councilmember Dwayne Waterman
Councilmember Bryan Roach
Councilmember Travis Johnson
Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager
Mr. Bobby Dyer, City Attorney
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Ms. Brittany Anderson, City Planner
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Mr. Steve Green, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Ms. Kelly Pendley, Operations Director
Mr. Mike Morgan, Information Technology Director*

Absent:

Mayor Pro Tem Shawn Tolan

3. Consideration to Approve Agenda

Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

4. Guests and Visitors**A. Introduction of Canton Public Safety Ambassadors - Police Chief Marty Ferrell**

Police Chief Marty Ferrell introduced the new Public Safety Ambassadors: Nadia Vollrath, Kaeley Ricketts, Isaiah Deese, and Christopher Green. Chief Ferrell discussed that the Public Safety Ambassadors program serves as an extension of the department, creating opportunities for civilian engagement in support of our mission to serve the city efficiently, effectively, and professionally.

5. Public Hearing**A. Public Hearing for Case ZCA2504-001 - Request to Eliminate Zoning Conditions on the Property Located at the End of Joe Green Lane - Zoning Administrator Steve Green**

Attachments: [ZCA2504-001 Documentation](#)

Zoning Administrator Steve Green provided an overview of the case discussing that the request is to remove conditions on a 30+ acre property that was approved for a neighborhood subdivision with up to 69 units. Mr. Green noted there were originally 19 conditions geared toward the development of a subdivision. The applicant/owner wants to build a single residential unit on the property with a possible Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Mayor Grant opened the public hearing and called for the applicant to present their case. Mr. Lee Lichenstein, owner of the property, presented stating he wishes to construct a single-family home for him and his wife. Mr. Lichenstein's builder Mr. Michael Grant spoke, stating the land disturbance would account for less than 1% of the property and provided renderings of the proposed custom home. Ms. Winnie Whitmore spoke in favor of the application due to keeping more trees as a buffer. Mr. Steve Goley spoke in favor of the application stating he owns the adjacent property and is pleased to see only one house being built. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing and opened discussion to Council. No further discussion was had.

6. Consideration to Approve Minutes

- A. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - May 15, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - May 15, 2025](#)

Councilmember Waterman made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

7. Informational Items

- A. Brief on the City's Impact Fee Program Update - City Planner Brittany Anderson

Attachments: [Impact Fee Program Update](#)

City Planner Brittany Anderson gave an update on the Impact Fee Methodology Update. Staff is working with Raftellis on the update and will be meeting with them next week. Ms. Anderson informed the Council that staff will also work with the new Impact Fee Advisory Board for follow-up recommendations.

- B. Presentation of Platinum Award - Mayor Bill Grant

Attachments: [Platinum Award](#)

Mayor Grant stated the City's Water Treatment Plant received the Platinum Award from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals for operating with 100% compliance during 2024. The Platinum Award also represents five consecutive years of receiving the Gold Award. Mayor Grant presented the award to City Engineer Bethany Watson.

8. Other Announcements

None

9. Ten Minute Public Input

Ms. Clara Ellis spoke about concerns with the pedestrian crossing at Keeter Road, Village Drive, and Holly Village Drive. Ms. Ellis stated she is the Chair of a citizen task force in the area and is requesting that Council consider additional signage and traffic calming devices.

Ms. Rebecca Law discussed the same concerns as Ms. Ellis. Ms. Law stated she thinks the geometry of the intersection and visibility would allow for a full stop and discussed speeding in the area.

Ms. Judith Bond discussed the same concerns as Ms. Ellis and Ms. Law noting she believes the crosswalk is unsafe and that improvements to the intersection would have a positive impact on property values.

Mr. Taylor Steele discussed the level of complexity for the creation of the Community Land Trust and spoke about land values.

Mr. Thomas Weaver discussed his support for the renovation of the Tippens gymnasium.

Mr. Stephen Peck thanked the Council for the work on improving noise on Killian Street.

10. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of the Award of Aspect on the River Vault Install to Cummins Enterprises in the Amount of \$73,712.57 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Aspect on the River](#)

- B. Approval of the Award of Task Order 7 Addendum 2 for Supplemental Services for Ridge Pine Elevated Tank and Booster Pump Station for Construction Administration to Black & Veatch in the Amount of \$498,661 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Black & Veatch - Task Order 7 Addendum 2](#)

- C. Approval of the Award of Task Order 13 to Black & Veatch for Canton's Water System Master Plan Project in the Amount of \$486,500 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Black & Veatch - Task Order 13](#)

Councilmember McGrew made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

11. Old Business

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on Downtown Master Plan - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Downtown Master Plan](#)

Ms. Watson noted that Modern Mobility Partners made changes to the Downtown Master Plan based upon Council feedback including the requirement of a feasibility study for staff and Council input prior to any road diet projects. Mayor Grant confirmed that those statements were in all areas of the road diet. Ms. Watson stated yes. Councilmember Waterman asked if any costs were associated with the update. Ms. Watson stated no. Councilmember Roach clarified that Council would vote on each individual road diet project prior to moving forward with any of them. Ms. Watson stated that was correct. Councilmember Waterman made a motion to approve the Downtown Master Plan. Councilmember Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- B. Discussion and Possible Action on Right of Way Acquisition for Parcels 2 and 5 for West Main Street Pedestrian Improvements Project in the Amount of \$54,853 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [West Main Street ROW Acquisition](#)

Ms. Watson noted that the two parcels would require permanent easements, construction easements, and right of way acquisition for construction. The two parcels were negotiated with the property owners. Ms. Watson stated that staff recommends approval. Mayor Grant clarified that price per square foot was identical. Ms. Watson said yes. Councilmember Roach made a motion to approve the right of way acquisition of Parcels 2 and 5 for the West Main Street Pedestrian Improvements Project in the Amount of \$54,853. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- C. Discussion and Possible Action on Letter of Support for I-575 Emergency Median Opening - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [I-575 Emergency Median Opening Letter of Support](#)

Ms. Watson provided the background on this item. Practical Design Partners (PDP) was hired to design a median crossing. Once completed, the permit design was submitted to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and was unfortunately denied. Ms. Watson discussed that the letter of support would help move the project forward and would be submitted along with support letters from the Cherokee County Fire Chief and County Manager. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the letter of support for the I-575 emergency median opening. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- D. Discussion of the Canton Housing Team Recommendation That the City Council Approve the Creation of the Canton Community Land Trust - Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton

Attachments: [Canton Community Land Trust](#)

Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton spoke about the items within Council's packet and noted he also provided a handout. Mr. Patton discussed the multiple

types of formulas used for resale and gave information regarding Canton's Area Median Income (AMI). City Attorney Bobby Dyer discussed that the current Down Payment Assistance Program is capped at 80% AMI and that is likely too low. If affordability is the goal of Council, a buyer needs to be above 80% to qualify for a loan. Mr. Dyer provided a handout which discussed what an increase to 120% AMI would look like. Mr. Dyer discussed a scenario of how a land trust corporation would be created for North Canton. The Land Trust could then seek proposals from developers to build on the site. Mr. Dyer noted that any proposed development would have to be approved by the City Council. The purchaser would buy the structure and the right to occupy the premises through a lease. The land price is left out of the deal to help make the home more affordable. The Down Payment Assistance Program could have raised income limits. The Lease would provide that a homeowner could make improvements to the structure approved by the Land Trust if a building permit is required. Mr. Dyer discussed that for resale, the lease and structure would be sold. If future purchasers are limited to a set of AMI, it limits the potential sales price of the property. Mr. Dyer noted that AMI increases with inflation and is a lagging indicator but will track the property value over time. Mr. Dyer stated a lot of education on the front end would be required for buyers as it is not a standard transaction. Mr. Dyer stated that if the Council does not want to do the Land Trust on the North Canton (Laurel Canyon) site, the City should sell the property. Mayor Grant asked if the Land Trust approval would be a blanket trust across the City or would it be per project. Mr. Dyer stated it should just be for this property to get it started. Mayor Grant noted that the idea was to make homeownership affordable for those Canton residents that currently cannot afford a product and that tying in the Down Payment Assistance Program is a good idea. Councilmember Waterman asked about the sales price for the second owner of a home within the Land Trust. Mr. Dyer noted that it would be market driven within a specific earning group. Councilmember Waterman asked how that would be governed. Mr. Dyer noted it is the assignment of the lease that is the control. Councilmember Roach asked how that is enforced. Mr. Dyer stated it would be covered in the lease. Councilmember McGrew asked if the steps to tailor the resale would impact investment buyers. Mr. Dyer stated that the covenants would not allow rentals. Councilmember McGrew asked what would happen in a hardship. Mr. Dyer noted that it would have to be thought through. Councilmember McGrew asked what the steps would be to dissolve the Land Trust. Mr. Dyer stated that it could not be done faster than the terms of the leases. Mr. Patton discussed examples of successful Land Trusts within other jurisdictions. Councilmember Roach noted that he would like to see the Land Trust established before the City starts giving land away. Mr. Dyer noted that once a Land Trust is set up, it could be used for many different properties. Staff just really needs to know that Council wants to move forward with the Land Trust for the North Canton (Laurel Canyon) property. Councilmember Johnson asked about the current AMI. Mr. Dyer discussed the lack of inventory for the current AMI. Mr. Patton noted the median home sales price is \$498,000.

12. New Business

- A. Discussion of Public Safety Renovations - Police Chief Marty Ferrell

Attachments: [Public Safety Renovations](#)

Chief Ferrell discussed some recommended renovations to the existing Public

Safety Building, including the lobby area to make additional room to assist the public, improve the training area on the third floor, and create a fitness center for physical training on the ground floor. Chief Ferrell stated the low bid came in just under \$200,000 and would be funded through Impact Fees. Mayor Grant asked if these improvements would serve the department for now. Chief Ferrell stated yes. Councilmember Johnson asked if the training area would be open to all City employees. Chief Ferrell stated yes. Councilmember Waterman asked if Chief Ferrell is comfortable with the low bid given the range of bids received and the quality of work. Chief Ferrell stated yes and noted bids tend to be high in historic buildings. Councilmember McGrew asked at what point the City should build a new Public Safety facility. Chief Ferrell stated that at some point in the future a new building will be needed.

- B. Discussion of Canton Community Center and Gymnasium Rehabilitation Project - Operations Manager Kelly Pendley

Attachments: [Community Center and Gymnasium Rehab](#)

Operations Director Kelly Pendley overviewed the bid on the gymnasium to include roofing, HVAC, ADA compliance, doors, windows, etc. Ms. Pendley stated that four bids were received and provided a brief summary of each bid ranging from the lowest at around \$1.9 million to the highest at just over \$4 million. Ms. Pendley stated that in 2022 Cherokee County provided the City an asbestos report for the gymnasium. Ms. Pendley said a lead-based paint evaluation was not completed prior to the bid. The City had this done and the evaluation showed the building is full of lead paint which would need to be considered as part of any bid approval. Mayor Grant noted that the building is historic and has value but the City does not want another money pit. Mayor Grant stated more discussion needs to take place. Councilmember Waterman asked about the lead paint evaluation and potential costs. City Manager Billy Peppers noted there was not a cost for removal provided in the evaluation but there is lead on almost every surface of the structure. Mr. Peppers said that Council could reject all bids and rebid with more information. Ms. Pendley stated she believes there will be two estimates on lead paint remediation in the next couple of weeks.

- C. Discussion of Georgia Power Relocation Agreement in the Amount of \$40,523 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Relocation Agreement](#)

Ms. Watson stated the Canton Creek Project will require the relocation of some power poles due to the pedestrian bridge. Ms. Watson noted the cost would be included in the grant funding of the project.

- D. Discussion of the Award of the Ridge Pine Elevated Tank and Booster Pump Station Project to Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors, LLC in the Amount of \$13,237,000 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Ridge Pine Tank & Booster Pump](#)

Ms. Watson stated the City received three bids on the project. Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors LLC was the low bidder and has been vetted.

13. City Manager's Report

Mr. Peppers informed that there will not be a second Council meeting in June. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 3rd.

14. Council Introduced Items

None

15. Mayor's Report

None

16. Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate and Litigation

Councilmember Roach made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss real estate and litigation. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council