

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Final

Thursday, August 7, 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 Pastor Leonard Akers.

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. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Laura Rollins Derrick, City Attorney
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Ms. Brittany Anderson, City Planner
Mr. Tyler Peoples, Planning Tech
Ms. Mary Baker, Community Development Intern
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Mr. Ryan Lockett, Finance Director
Ms. Kelly Pendley, Operations Manager
Ms. Kristin Norton Green, Theatre Events and Facilities 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

None

5. Public Hearing

- A.** Public Hearing on Proposed Text Amendments Regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) - Community Development Intern Mary Baker

Attachments: [ADU Text Amendment](#)

Community Development Intern Mary Baker noted that a change to Item 4 in the "Generally" section has been made since submitting the ordinance to Council for review. An updated version of the ordinance has been placed at Council's seats. The change consists of adding Planned Development District so that PD and RA-6 districts can have one Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) if only one single-family home is currently present. It is also proposed that the Development Code Table 102-4 be amended to add an ADU row which will be discussed later during this meeting by Community Development Director Kevin Turner. Ms. Baker reviewed the other proposed amendments as presented at the last Council meeting. Mayor Grant opened the public hearing. Mr. Mark Crosby spoke about the proposed amendments noting that ADUs are meant to help with affordability. Mr. Crosby said the requirement which states that ADUs should not exceed 50% of the habitable floor area of the principal dwelling is difficult if the current primary residence is small. This creates hardship. Mr. Crosby also noted that having the ADUs be owner occupied is also difficult for investors. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing and opened the discussion to Councilmembers. Mayor Grant asked about the three City approved ADU plans available to residents and the square footage of the largest plan. Ms. Baker stated the largest plan is around 850 square feet. Councilmember McGrew asked about the required number of parking spaces. Ms. Baker stated that one space is required but more can be provided. Councilmember McGrew asked why Homeowner Association approval is necessary. Ms. Baker noted that it is just the best practice. Councilmember McGrew asked about hardships that might arise and cause conflict with the owner-occupied requirement. Mr. Turner stated that variances can be sought from the Board of Appeals. Mr. Turner also noted that much of the language provided in the amendments is standard within other municipalities. Councilmember McGrew asked about the requirement of access from the interior of a home. Mr. Turner said he believes it is a building code requirement. Council and staff discussed that ADUs can be attached or detached units. Also, variances can be sought for any of the provisions administratively, up to 20%, or through the Board of Appeals.

6. Consideration to Approve Minutes

- A. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - July 17, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - July 17, 2025](#)

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

7. Informational Items

- A. Information Only - Amendments to the Unified Development Code Land Use Table - Community Development Director Kevin Turner

Attachments: [UDC Land Use Table](#)

Mr. Turner stated the amendment will allow ADUs as permitted within Master Plan developments. A public hearing will be held at the next Council meeting. It is requested that action be taken at the same time as the public hearing to coincide with the ADU text amendment heard earlier in tonight's meeting.

- B. Information Only - Proposed Text Amendment to the Unified Development Code Regarding Design Guidelines and Standards - City Planner Brittany Anderson

Attachments: [UDC Amendment - Design Guidelines & Standards](#)

City Planner Brittany Anderson discussed the City's current design review process. The proposed amendments include the addition of an administrative review that will be conducted by staff. This will allow applicants to obtain certain permits quickly and seamlessly. Additional amendments include identifying and clarifying the staff that will make up the Design Review team and establishing an appeals process if an administrative review is denied by staff. A public hearing will be held at the next Council meeting.

- C. Information Only - Proposed Text Amendment to the City of Canton Code of Ordinances Regarding Expiration of Certificates of Appropriateness - City Planner Brittany Anderson

Attachments: [COA Ordinance Amendment](#)

Ms. Anderson informed that the current code states that Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) shall become void within six months unless construction has commenced. The proposed amendment states that the applicant shall have one year from the issuance of a COA to apply for building or land disturbance permit. This allows more time for the applicant to apply for permits without the need to seek an extension or reapply prior to the six-month expiration timeline. A public hearing will be held at the next Council meeting.

8. Other Announcements

None

9. Ten Minute Public Input

Mr. Thomas Weaver congratulated the City as being recognized as one of the safest in the metro Atlanta region. Mr. Weaver also discussed concern with drivers traveling the wrong way on the one-way streets downtown and requested that additional signage be installed.

10. Consent Agenda

None

11. Old Business

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, Fee Schedule, and Budget Ordinance - Finance Director Ryan Lockett

Attachments: [FY 26 Proposed Budget and Fee Schedule](#)

Finance Director Ryan Lockett stated the budget was presented to Council on

July 3rd and a public hearing was held on July 17th. A copy of the budget is available on the City's website and at City Hall. Mr. Luckett highlighted budget noting the following:

- *The City's proposed budget is balanced.*
- *The City is proposing a millage rate reduction, from 5.4 to 5.25 mills, which is lower than the Rollback Rate. Property tax exemptions are also increasing by 23% due to the City's adoption of the new floating homestead exemption.*
- *The FY 26 All Funds budget is \$94,698,927, an increase over FY 25 of about \$11.2 M or 13%. That increase is primarily due to an increase in capital projects planned for FY 26. The proposed budget includes nearly \$42 million in capital investment, including Water & Sewer, Parks, and Transportation infrastructure.*
- *The General Fund (GF), which is the primary operating fund for the City, is proposed at \$30.5 million for FY 26. The General Fund includes funding for core City services, such as Police, Fire, street maintenance, and parks. The FY 26 GF is proposed to increase by \$2.7 million, or 10%, over FY 25. The increase is due to day-to-day cost increases associated with providing City services, such as utilities, fleet, equipment and infrastructure maintenance, and the fire services payment to Cherokee County. The budget also includes funding for three new positions, the elimination of one position, and an employee compensation increase.*
- *The FY 26 proposed budget also includes funding for the City's partner organizations.*
- *The proposed budget includes funding for construction of South Canton Park as well as various other infrastructure projects, including trails, pedestrian bridges, intersection improvements, and water/sewer infrastructure.*
- *The budget includes two proposed fee increases: a 2.5% increase in water and sewer rates as well as a \$0.50 increase in the stormwater utility rate, from 1.25 to 1.75 per month. Both increases are needed to ensure that the City can continue to operate and maintain its water, sewer, and stormwater systems in a fiscally sustainable manner.*

Mayor Grant thanked all of Council and staff for their work on the budget and noted the proposed millage rate is the lowest in the City's history. Councilmember Johnson requested that information regarding City property taxes be shared with residents. Councilmember McGrew made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, fee schedule, and budget ordinance. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

B. Discussion and Possible Action on Amendments to the City of Canton Official Zoning Map - Planning Tech Tyler Peoples

Attachments: [Zoning Map Amendments](#)

Planning Tech Tyler Peoples stated the proposed amendments are based on errors and corrections discussed at the last two Council meetings. A public hearing was held on July 17th and no comments were received. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the amendments to the City of Canton Official Zoning Map. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- C. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Intergovernmental Contract to Create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank - Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton

Attachments: [Cherokee Regional Land Bank](#)

Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton stated that Council approved a Resolution to create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank. This is a formal adoption of the Intergovernmental Contract. Mr. Patton noted that each municipality in the Land Bank must appoint one member to the board. There must also be two members at large which have to be approved by all agencies within the Cherokee Regional Land Bank. Mayor Grant confirmed that the agencies in the Land Bank include Cherokee County, City of Canton, City of Holly Springs, and City of Woodstock. Councilmember Waterman made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Contract to Create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- D. Discussion and Possible Action on the Award of Task Order 8 for the Transportation Improvement Project Marietta Highway/Riverstone Parkway at Highway 140 Intersection Improvement Project Design Services to Michael Baker International in the Amount of \$283,150.13 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Michael Baker International - Task Order 8](#)

City Engineer Bethany Watson stated that this is a continuation of a current project with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). The Task Order includes Right of Way negotiations, SUE test holes, and FEMA Floodplain Zone AE Study. Staff is requesting action at this meeting due to a detour timeline which is hoped to avoid being done during school hours. Mayor Grant clarified that of the project total that the City is responsible for 20%. Ms. Watson stated that is correct. Of that 20%, 34.2% is paid using Impact Fees and the remainder is paid using SPLOST. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve Task Order 8 for the Transportation Improvement Project Marietta Highway/Riverstone Parkway at Highway 140 Intersection Improvement Project Design Services to Michael Baker International in the amount of \$283,150.13. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

12. New Business

- A. Discussion of the City's Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Board - Operations Manager Kelly Pendley

Attachments: [Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Board](#)

Operations Manager Kelly Pendley stated that the Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Board was established to provide guidance, recommendations, and public engagement on environmental programs and sustainability initiatives. Some of the accomplishments of the board include the adoption of the Sustainability Master Plan, the adoption of a new Native Plant Palette for the City, collaboration with Schneider Electric for solar projects within City parks, and public outreach and education. Ms. Pendley stated in recent years the board has experienced a persistent lack of attendance and participation from appointed members, resulting in the inability to meet quorums, hold

regular meetings, or effectively fulfill its mission. Due to ongoing inactivity, staff recommends dissolving the board and transitioning sustainability oversight and program development to an internal Sustainability Committee composed of City staff. This committee will ensure continuity in environmental efforts, departmental coordination, data tracking, and pursuit of sustainability certifications. Ms. Pendley stated that City staff are best positioned to integrate sustainability initiatives directly into municipal operations and capital projects, ensuring meaningful and measurable progress. Ms. Pendley provided Council an outline of the proposed staff committee. Mayor Grant thanked the current board members for their accomplishments to date and discussed the desire to continue to have public input regarding sustainability efforts. Councilmember Waterman spoke about the need for Councilmembers to be in contact with their appointments to City boards and stated he wants to make sure that any sustainability projects have a benefit.

- B. Discussion of Street Acceptance for City Maintenance for Streets in Great Sky Pod 15 - Sunrise Cove - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Street Acceptance - Great Sky Pod 15](#)

Ms. Watson stated that the streets within Pod 15 have been reviewed for the requirements of the Unified Development Code and are ready to be accepted by the City.

- C. Discussion of Task Order 1 from Brown & Caldwell for Canton Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) Support Services in the Amount of \$109,050 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Brown & Caldwell - Task Order 1](#)

Ms. Watson stated that due to increased regulations, growing industrial users, and new plant operations, City staff has requested a proposal from Brown & Caldwell (B&C) to provide Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) Support Services. B&C will assist with updates to the City's local limits under the IPP for the Water Pollution Control Plant. The objective of this project is to evaluate the existing local limits to determine if new limits need to be developed and develop those limits if need. Additionally, select IPP support tasks are proposed, which will include reviewing and updating the program documents and complementing an Industrial User Survey. Ms. Watson stated that in conjunction with this, the City will be purchasing new software. Mayor Grant noted he is aware that this comes due to the new plant but asked if there are any other guidelines that require this review. Ms. Watson stated that with the updated plant and additional capacity, a more robust IPP is required. Councilmember Roach asked if the new software was included in the project cost. Ms. Watson stated no but that the software is something that has been budgeted. Councilmember Johnson asked about updates to the software. Ms. Watson noted that a yearly upgrade will be included.

- D. Discussion of the Award of Task Order 8 for the Transportation Improvement Project Highway 140 at Reinhardt College Parkway Intersection Improvement Project Design to Michael Baker International in the Amount of \$127,703.95 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Hwy 140 at Reinhardt College Pkwy - Task Order 8](#)

Ms. Watson informed that the Task Order consists of final Right of Way plans, complete Design Variances, and addresses Roadway Alignment Intersection & Design comments. Ms. Watson noted that 20% of the project cost is to be paid by the City with those funds coming from Impact Fees and SPLOST. Councilmember McGrew asked about the estimated start date of the project. Ms. Watson stated that construction is set to begin at the end of 2027. Right of Way acquisition is set to begin in summer of 2026. Ms. Watson stated construction is estimated to take two years. Councilmember Johnson asked if there was a way to expedite the construction. Ms. Watson stated the due to the GDOT process, it is moving as quickly as it possibly can.

- E. Discussion of Project List for Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [TSPLOST Project List](#)

Ms. Watson reviewed the projects listed in the agenda item attachment. The list will be sent to Cherokee County Board of Commissioners for their review. Mayor Grant stated that Cherokee County is placing a TSPLOST referendum on the ballot for November's election. Should it be approved by the voters, the City will receive a portion of those proceeds for transportation projects. Ms. Watson stated that an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) will be presented at the next Council meeting. City Manager Billy Peppers stated that the City is estimated to receive between \$55-60 million over the six-year TSPLOST. Mr. Peppers noted that if the municipalities did not sign the SPLOST, it would be a five-year SPLOST. The cities would still receive a portion of funds however it would be divided based on roadway miles as opposed to population. Councilmember McGrew asked how projects would be prioritized. Ms. Watson stated that many of the plans are already set to be completed within the next few years. The other plans would be based on need.

- F. Discussion of Hickory Flat Highway Gateway Concept Plan - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Hickory Flat Highway Gateway](#)

Ms. Watson reviewed the history of the project area and the work completed by staff, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Modern Mobility Partners. Ms. Watson stated the concept plan has three objectives: transportation improvements to aid in the movement of people using all modes through the corridor; placemaking elements to welcome people into the City, Sunnyside neighborhood, and Downtown Canton; and identification of redevelopment opportunities along the corridor, especially the DDA Site. Ms. Watson provided renderings displaying the proposed roundabouts, sidewalks, bridges, roadway improvements, recreation, and new commercial and residential developments. Councilmember Roach asked if the roundabouts and/or roadway improvements could be moved based on right of way acquisition. Ms. Watson stated yes and noted this is just a concept plan. Mayor Grant asked about the next steps. Ms. Watson stated the DDA approved the concept at their last meeting. Staff will bring the concept back to Council at the next meeting for possible action.

- G. Presentation and Discussion of the Proposal by Goodwyn Mills Cawood for Professional Architectural Services for Project 1006: North Street Gateway Redevelopment - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [GMC Proposal](#)

Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram stated that Goodwyn Mills Cawood provided the City with a revised proposal to provide professional architectural services for the design and development of the referenced project. This will include basic architectural/engineering services at 4% of construction costs (not to exceed \$2,831,400), construction administration services at 2.2% of construction costs, as well as additional services as needed. This proposal will be provided to the Downtown Development Authority at their upcoming regularly scheduled meeting on August 13th for their consideration to approve. Mr. Ingram reviewed the proposed North Street Gateway Redevelopment project details. Mr. Ingram requested that if there are any questions or comments from Council to please send those as soon as possible. Mr. Ingram and Mr. Peppers discussed the partnership with Cherokee County and the shared costs of the project. Mr. Ingram noted that one contractor will be selected to develop the entire project as to avoid any conflicting schedules, supply chain issues, etc.

- H. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the City to Apply to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#)

Mr. Ingram stated that a few times each year the Etowah River floods its banks. These floods deposit tons of sediment on top of and inside the Hickory Log Creek Reservoir intake vault. This inundation of silt creates a situation that makes the intake virtually unusable and requires costly, dangerous and time-consuming dredging to remove. Mr. Ingram stated that Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) and the City have budgeted a capital project to raise the vault's height to two feet above the 100-year floodplain, thus reducing the chances of this sedimentation. The expected cost of this project is \$2 million (the City being responsible for 25% of this). The City has allocated funds for this project within the FY 26 budget. Mr. Ingram stated that in correspondence with GEMA, it is believed that this project would be eligible for funding through the HMGP. Mr. Ingram stated that he is requesting that Council approve staff, in partnership with CCMWA, to apply for this grant that could offset up to 75% of the overall project cost. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the City to apply to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- I. Discussion of Resolution to Add Ryan Luckett as an Authorized Administrator Regarding the City's Investments with Georgia Fund1 Local Government Investment Pool - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [GAFund1 Resolution](#)

Mr. Ingram informed that to add Mr. Luckett (or anyone else) as an authorized user, the City must pass a new resolution identifying all the authorized users. Contrary to the paper resolution that was originally executed when the City first entered the investment pool, the resolutions are now executed electronically. A paper copy of the old resolution has been provided in the agenda attachment. The electronic process will require the Mayor, the authorized users, and a notary to convene and electronically approve the resolution.

13. City Manager's Report

Mr. Peppers informed that the City has received a fee waiver request from MUST Ministries for Building Permit Fees in the amount of \$1,329.75. The request is for a structure on Old Donaldson Road which MUST is in the process of renovating. A copy of the fee waiver request letter can be found in the office of the City Clerk. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to add the request to waive permit fees at 226 Old Donaldson Road to the agenda. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve the waiver of the building permit fees at 226 Old Donaldson Road in the amount of \$1,329.75. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mr. Peppers discussed the award of a Safety Action Plan Grant from GDOT for safety projects within the City and the award of the 6th Annual Chris Conti Memorial Grant to the Canton Police Department for gym equipment. Mr. Peppers stated that the City has been ranked #20 of the safest suburbs in America. Mr. Peppers stated the new traffic signal at Reinhardt College Parkway and Reservoir Drive is operational. Lastly, Mr. Peppers recognized Mike Loizou as the Team Member of the Month for July.

14. Council Introduced Items

None

15. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grant noted that Council has approved a tax cut and thanked the Police Department for all that they do so that the City could be recognized as the #20 safest suburb in America.

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

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

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council