

# **Canton, Georgia**

*110 Academy Street  
Canton, Georgia 30114*



## **Minutes - Final - Draft**

**Thursday, January 22, 2026**

**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 Councilor Rice.*

**2. Call to Order**

*The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.*

***Members Present:***

***Mayor Bill Grant***  
***Mayor Pro Tem Farris Yawn***  
***Councilor Darrell Rice***  
***Councilor Bryan Roach***  
***Councilor Dwayne Waterman***  
***Councilor Travis Johnson***  
***Councilor Shawn Tolan***  
***Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager***  
***Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager***  
***Mr. Jeff Rusbridge, City Attorney***  
***Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief***  
***Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director***  
***Mr. Tyler Peoples, City Planner***  
***Mr. Jakob Allen, City Planner***  
***Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director***  
***Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer***  
***Mr. Nick Wilson, Land Development Administrator***  
***Mr. Ryan Lockett, Finance Director***  
***Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager***  
***Mr. Jacky Cheng, Digital Content Specialist***  
***Mr. Russell Martin, IT Systems Analyst***  
***Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk***

***Absent:***

***None***

**3. Consideration to Approve Agenda**

*City Manager Billy Peppers requested to add an item to New Business for discussion and possible action to declare a State of Emergency ahead of Winter Storm Fern. Councilor Waterman made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Pro Tem Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

**4. Guests and Visitors**

- A. Presentation from Cherokee County School District Superintendent Dr. Mary Elizabeth Davis

*Dr. Mary Elizabeth Davis, Cherokee County School Superintendent, provided Council a presentation which discussed the school board's goals and accountability and the district's financial infrastructure. Dr. Davis stated that Cherokee County has moved from the 21st highest to the 8th highest achieving district in Georgia out of 180 districts. Dr. Davis further discussed Canton's Innovation Zones (Cherokee, Creekview, and Sequoyah) noting their progress and workforce development. Visuals and details of the new Cherokee High School were provided as well as information regarding classroom additions at Creekland Middle School and Creekview High School and the athletic facility improvements at Sequoyah High School. In conclusion, Dr. Davis spoke about the future use of the current Cherokee High School stating input from focus groups has been received resulting in nine themes. Feasibility studies will be conducted on these nine themes. A copy of the presentation can be found in the office of the City Clerk.*

## **5. Consideration to Approve Minutes**

- A. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - January 8, 2026

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - January 8, 2026](#)

*Councilor Tolan made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilor Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

## **6. Informational Items**

- A. Review of Monthly Financial Report for September 2025 - Finance Director Ryan Lockett

Attachments: [September Financials](#)

*Finance Director Ryan Lockett provided Council the monthly financial report for September 2025. Mr. Lockett stated these numbers within the report are preliminary pending the final audit. Mr. Lockett reviewed the process for closing out fiscal years and noted that staff will bring a year-end budget amendment to Council to officially close out FY2025. Following Mr. Lockett's review of the report, Council and staff discussed variable costs and how staff forecasts budgets each year.*

## **7. Other Announcements**

*None*

**8. Ten Minute Public Input**

*Mr. Taylor Steele spoke about the need for additional streetlights near the new Cherokee High School.*

**9. Consent Agenda**

*None*

**10. Old Business**

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on Engagement with Granicus to Upgrade the City of Canton Website Platform - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Granicus Proposal](#)

*Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram reviewed the information provided at the last meeting noting the City has until April 26, 2027 to come into compliance. The upgrade will take 9-12 months to complete. Councilor Tolan made a motion to approve an engagement with Granicus to upgrade the City's website plate in an amount not to exceed \$30,513. Councilor Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

**11. New Business**

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on Task Order 8 to Practical Design Partners (PDP) for Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) at New Cherokee High School in the Amount of \$34,000 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Practical Design Partners Task Order 8](#)

*City Engineer Bethany Watson stated that in reviewing the traffic patterns for the new Cherokee High School and in consultation with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), staff recommends utilizing a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) pattern for the new entrance of the high school at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. An RCUT will direct outbound traffic from the school to the right and towards Reinhardt College Parkway, while allowing a left turn from that direction into the school. This will cut down on cross traffic conflicts. Staff is requesting action to complete the design and project prior to the start of the next school year. Councilor Roach made a motion to approve Task Order 8 to Practical Design Partners for an RCUT at the new Cherokee High School in an amount not to exceed \$34,000. Councilor Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

- B. Discussion of the Award of Task Order 9 for the Transportation Improvement Project Highway 140 at Reinhardt College Parkway Intersection Improvement Project Design to Michael Baker International in the Amount of \$710,651.39 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

**Attachments:** [Michael Baker International Task Order 9](#)

***Ms. Watson informed that this is the final Professional Engineering Task Order for this project and includes the following:***

- 1. Programmatic Cost Estimate Updates***
- 2. Environmental Documentation and Required Studies***
- 3. Final Construction Plans***
- 4. Provide Plans***
- 5. Specifications and Estimates (PS&E)***
- 6. Final Utility Coordination***
- 7. Prior Rights Research***
- 8. Right of Way Acquisition of 26 Parcels***

***This project is funded 80% by Federal Transportation Funds through GDOT and the ARC. The City's 20% match is made up through Impact Fees and SPLOST. Staff will request action at the first meeting in February. It was requested that Ms. Watson provide an overall project update at an upcoming meeting.***

- C. Discussion and Possible Action on an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the City of Ball Ground Regarding a 2000 Ford F-550 Bucket Truck - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

**Attachments:** [Bucket Truck IGA](#)

***Mr. Ingram noted that last fall the City placed the old bucket truck up for surplus. A new bucket truck has been purchased and is in the City's fleet. The City intended to place the old truck on GovDeals, however the City of Ball Ground approached the City about the purchase of the truck. Mr. Ingram stated that staff consulted with the City Attorney if this could be accomplished outside of a traditional bid and it was determined that the City could dispose of the vehicle to Ball Ground through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). Mr. Ingram stated that the City of Ball Ground has offered \$3,500 and is amenable to a condition that would allow Canton to borrow this equipment should our new equipment be down for service. Councilor Yawn made a motion to approve the IGA with the City of Ball Ground to purchase the 2000 Ford F-550 Bucket Truck. Councilor Rice seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.***

- D. Discussion of the Reservoir Manager Position at Hickory Log Creek Reservoir Located on Lake Canton - City Manager Billy Peppers

Attachments: [Reservoir Manager Position](#)

*Mr. Peppers informed that there are two documents that govern the Hickory Log Creek Project: 1.) A Joint Project Agreement (JPA) with Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA); and 2.) A Reservoir Management Plan (RMP) by the City of Canton. The JPA outlines the staffing of the reservoir operations, cost-sharing, and allocation of the resource. The RMP outlines the use of the reservoir and impacts from adjacent properties. The Reservoir Superintendent, which handles operations, is a CCMWA employee that is jointly funded by the City of Canton. The Reservoir Manager is responsible for reviewing permitted uses on the reservoir, applications for use, protection of the buffer areas, and making determinations about use compared to the JPA. The RMP states that the position will be a City employee. Mr. Peppers stated that he recommends the creation of a policy to allow the Reservoir Manager to be the Reservoir Superintendent at the discretion of the City Manager and to set up a review process so that the City still controls the final decisions on permits, applications, and approvals. Mr. Peppers noted that a draft policy will be presented at the next Council meeting.*

**Item 11E. Discussion and Possible Action to Declare a State of Emergency Ahead of Winter Storm Fern:**

*Mr. Peppers explained the emergency powers as stated in the City's Code of Ordinances under Section 26-3. Mr. Peppers stated that the State of Georgia issued a State of Emergency earlier that day. Mr. Peppers reviewed the emergency management powers, duties, and authorities granted under a State of Emergency as outlined in the Code of Ordinances. Councilor Roach made a motion to allow the Mayor to issue a State of Emergency for the City of Canton. Councilor Rice seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

**12. City Manager's Report**

*Mr. Peppers provided an update on Winter Storm Fern and the City's weather plans. All information will be made available on the City's website and social media platforms as soon as possible.*

*Mr. Peppers recognized Jackson Jordan as the Team Member of the Month.*

*Mr. Peppers stated that the initial health insurance renewal plans have been received. Staff will be having a meeting in the coming days to review this information.*

*There is a Council retreat planned for March 26th – 28th at Trilith in Fayetteville, GA.*

*The City's first Citizens Academy will begin in February. Applications are still being accepted through the end of the month.*

*Mr. Peppers informed that the Board of Appeals recently heard an appeal of the Community Development Director's decision on a case. The Board upheld the Director's decision. The applicant would now like to appeal their case to Council. This will be added to the next Council agenda for determination if the appeal will be heard by Council.*

**13. Council Introduced Items**

*None*

**14. Mayor's Report****A. Canton Building Authority Appointment**

*Mayor Grant appointed Councilor Rice to serve on the Canton Building Authority. Councilor Roach seconded the appointment, and it was approved unanimously.*

*Mayor Grant noted the State of the City Address is scheduled for Thursday, January 29th to be held in the auditorium on City Hall.*

*Mayor Grant thanked City staff for all their storm preparations and encouraged residents to stay informed via the City's website and social media and well as receive weather updates through Atlanta-based new stations or The Weather Channel.*

**15. Adjourn**

*Councilor Tolan made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

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*Bill Grant, Mayor*

*Attest:*

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*Annie Fortner, City Clerk*

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*Dates Minutes Approved by Council*