

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Draft

Thursday, July 3, 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 Mr. Darrell Rice.

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.

Members Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Mayor Pro Tem Shawn Tolan
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
Mr. Jeff Rusbridge, City Attorney
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Mr. Tyler Peoples, Planning Tech
Ms. Mary Baker, Community Development Intern
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Mr. Steve Green, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Mr. Ryan Lockett, Finance Director
Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager
Mr. Jacky Cheng, Digital Content Specialist
Mr. Mike Morgan, Information Technology Director*

Absent:

None

3. Consideration to Approve Agenda

City Manager Billy Peppers requested to add an item to Old Business for the discussion and possible action on an Amicus Brief with the litigation with the City of Milton as well as add an Executive Session to discuss litigation. Councilmember Waterman made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilmember Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

4. Guests and Visitors**A. Canton Tourism Board Presentation**

Digital Content Specialist Jacky Cheng reviewed the website, social media, and newsletter growth of Explore Canton. Mr. Cheng also discussed the City's events and business impacts. Ms. Dana Cox, Chair of the Canton Tourism Board, spoke about upcoming projects such as billboards, kiosks, website improvements, and more.

5. Consideration to Approve Minutes

- A. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - June 5, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - June 5, 2025](#)

Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

6. Informational Items

- A. Review of April Financial Report - Finance Director Ryan Luckett

Attachments: [April Financial Report](#)

Finance Director Ryan Luckett highlighted fiscal activity in the City's major fund sources for the month of April.

- B. Information Only - Amendments to the City of Canton Official Zoning Map - Planning Tech Tyler Peoples

Attachments: [Zoning Map Amendments](#)

Planning Tech Tyler Peoples stated that within the last few months, staff has discovered several properties on the Official Zoning Map in which their current zoning is either incorrect or incompatible with the Unified Development Code. Staff has researched the zoning history of these properties and have determined the appropriate zoning categories by which these properties should instead be designated. Mr. Peoples noted some properties have already been updated by the GIS department; however, Mayor and City Council approval is necessary to amend the Official Zoning Map.

7. Other Announcements

None

8. Ten Minute Public Input

Mr. Thomas Weaver discussed federal and state legislation going into effect and urged Council to be good stewards of the City's budget.

9. Consent Agenda

None

10. Old Business

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on 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 the case summary and noted at the public hearing at the last Council meeting two citizens spoke in support of the application. No other comments have been received. Councilmember McGrew asked about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), accessory structures, and buffers. Mr. Green stated one ADU is allowed, a barn or storage unit would be considered an accessory structure which would require a permit, and a 50-foot buffer is required along the property line abutting Cherokee County property. Councilmember McGrew asked if a 50-foot buffer could be placed around the entire property. Mr. Green stated that it could be added as a condition. Councilmember Yawn asked if a condition could be placed to allow for only one home on the property. City Attorney Jeff Rusbridge stated yes. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve case ZCA2504-001 with the condition of only one home and ADU. Councilmember McGrew seconded the motion. Council discussed the buffer around the property. Councilmember Johnson amended his motion to also include a 50-foot buffer around the property. Councilmember McGrew seconded the amended motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- B. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Canton Housing Team Recommendation to Create a Canton Community Land Trust - Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton

Attachments: [Canton Community Land Trust](#)

Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton reviewed the information provided at the June Council meeting regarding the Community Land Trust. Mr. Patton noted that the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws would need to be approved by the Council as well as the appointment of the Board members. Board members would receive training. Following discussion between Council and staff, it was clarified that the request was to determine whether to move forward with the creation of the Community Land Trust. Mr. Patton reiterated that the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, etc. would come before Council for formal adoption. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made a motion to approve the Canton Housing Team recommendation to create the Canton Community Land Trust. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- C. Discussion and Possible Action on Public Safety Renovations - Police Chief Marty Ferrell

Attachments: [Public Safety Building Renovations](#)

Mayor Grant confirmed the funds for this project would come from Impact Fees and SPLOST. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the Public Safety renovations. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- D. Discussion and Possible Action on 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](#)

City Engineer Bethany Watson reviewed the project schedule and noted that the construction would be in conjunction with the South Canton Park. Councilmember Waterman made a motion to approve 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. Councilmember Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- E. Update on West Main Street Pedestrian Bridge Concepts - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [West Main Street Pedestrian Bridge Concepts](#)

Ms. Watson stated the pedestrian bridge would connect downtown Canton to The Mill on Etowah. Ms. Watson reviewed the four proposed concepts and costs. Staff recommends concept #2 as it is the least impactful and more attractive. Ms. Watson discussed what crossings are allowed over the railroad. Ms. Watson noted the funding source for this project would be Impact Fees and SPLOST and is Tax Allocation District eligible.

- F. Discussion and Possible Action on the Tax Allocation District Intergovernmental Agreement with Cherokee County - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Tax Allocation District IGA](#)

Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram stated that the City and Cherokee County have been working toward an Intergovernmental Agreement regarding the collection and uses of ad valorem property taxes levied within the Tax Allocation District (TAD) #1 - Downtown and Etowah River Corridor (TAD). The provided agreement establishes the tax allocation increment base as of December 31, 2022. Mr. Ingram stated that this will permit the City to use City and County portions of the ad valorem tax collected within the TAD for public infrastructure projects within the TAD. Councilmember Waterman made a motion made a motion to approve the Tax Allocation District Intergovernmental Agreement with Cherokee County. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Councilmember Yawn was absent during the vote.

- G. Discussion and Possible Action on an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City, Downtown Development Authority, and Cherokee County for the Development and Construction of a New County Annex and Mixed-Use Project along North Street - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [IGA for North Street Project](#)

Mr. Ingram discussed that the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) represents and memorializes a roadmap that the City, Downtown Development Authority, and Cherokee County will use as we move toward realizing a project that will become a County government annex and mixed-use development that will include retail, commercial, residential, parking deck with 800+ spaces, and a possible hotel development along North Street. This IGA encompasses the collective vision and direction of the various stakeholders and is the product of many discussions between those parties. Mr. Ingram noted this IGA enumerates the various responsibilities that each party will have which includes: 1) Providing for the County to engage their own Architectural/Engineering on the Annex building; 2) Allows for a single Architect/Engineer to provide civil and site

engineering services for the project as a whole; 3) Allows for one Construction Manager at Risk to oversee the whole project, creating efficiencies that all parties can realize; 4) Embodies the goals and direction from the recently completed concept plan administered by Goodwyn Mills Cawood; 5) Identifies the funding mechanisms and responsibilities for each party. Mr. Ingram noted the Downtown Development Authority has already ratified the agreement. Mr. Ingram requested that should Council approve the agreement, that it be contingent upon the County approving the TAD Agreement and the North Street Agreement. Council and staff discussed being able to control the growth and development of downtown, the amount the County will be contributing to the project, and the City owning the property vs. private developer owning the property. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City, Downtown Development Authority, and Cherokee County for the development and construction of a new County annex and mixed-use project along North Street contingent upon Cherokee County approving the Tax Allocation District Intergovernmental Agreement and North Street Intergovernmental Agreement. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion. The motion passed with all Councilmembers present voting for the motion except Councilmember Roach. Councilmember Roach voted against the motion. Councilmember Johnson was absent for the vote.

Item 10H - Discussion and Possible Action on an Amicus Brief with the Litigation with the City of Milton:

Mr. Peppers spoke about the previously approved resolution for this litigation. Mr. Peppers stated that the Supreme Court had decided to hear the case and the City of Milton has requested that all the parties that participated in the original Amicus Brief refile a resolution. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the resolution for the Amicus Brief as presented. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

11. New Business

- A.** Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget and Fee Schedule - Finance Director Ryan Luckett

Attachments: [FY 2026 Proposed Budget & Fee Schedule](#)

Mr. Peppers stated that he has provided a copy of the Budget In Brief Memorandum to all of Council. Mr. Peppers noted the proposed budget is based upon a property tax cut of 5.25 mills. This will allow the City to forego a public hearing on the millage rate due to the cut. Finance Director Ryan Luckett highlighted the City's funds, history of tax collections, budget changes, and proposed Capital Improvements. Mr. Luckett stated the next steps will be to hold a public hearing on July 17th and possible adoption on August 7th.

- B.** Discussion and Possible Action on Emergency Pump Replacement for Ridge Pine Booster Station in the Amount of \$65,685.71 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Ridge Pine Emergency Pump Replacement](#)

Ms. Watson stated the Ridge Pine Booster Station has a pump in disrepair. Due to the pump being obsolete, the City is unable to repair the pump and it will need to be replaced immediately to mitigate service disruption in our water service area. Ms. Watson noted that due to this being an emergency item, a pump has already been ordered. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve the emergency pump replacement for Ridge Pine Booster Station in the amount of \$65,685.71. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- C. Discussion of the Cherokee County Local Emergency Operations Plan - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Local Emergency Operations Plan](#)

Mr. Ingram discussed that the Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency has started the process of updating the Cherokee County Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), which is due to expire later this year. The LEOP will supersede the plan currently in place which was adopted in August 2021. In conjunction with approving the renewal of the LEOP, the County has also asked for each municipality within Cherokee County to review and approve a Continuity of Government (COG) Resolution. The original resolution along with an updated draft have been included within the Council's agenda packet. Mr. Ingram noted that at Council's July 17th meeting staff will ask that both the LEOP and the revised COG be considered for approval.

- D. Discussion of Proposed Cell Tower Site - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Cell Tower](#)

Mr. Ingram stated that GulfSouth Towers, LLC (GST) has approached the City about installing a cell tower at the Lake Canton boat/canoe launch site. Mr. Ingram discussed the proposed lease terms, agreements, and payments. Mr. Ingram noted that City management has a number of concerns regarding the proposal. Council had no interest in moving forward with the cell tower.

- E. Discussion of Resolution to Authorize Check Signers for the City of Canton Bank Accounts - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Authorized Check Signers](#)

Mr. Ingram discussed that the City would like to request to add the Finance Director, Ryan Luckett, as one of the City's check signers. Currently the signers are: Teresa Fitts, Nathan Ingram, Annie Fortner, Donna Bell, and Jon Warrix. Action will be requested at the next Council meeting.

12. City Manager's Report

Mr. Peppers provided an update on Cherokee County's plan for a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). Mr. Peppers stated a list of potential projects to include in the TSPLOST will be presented to Council. Mr. Peppers discussed digital licenses and noted the Police Department will soon have the technology they need for them. Lastly, Mr. Peppers discussed the upcoming Independence Day activities within the City.

13. Council Introduced Items

None

14. Mayor's Report

None

15. Adjourn

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

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council