

MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2025, | 5:00 P.M.
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
(417 PENDLETON STREET, WAYCROSS, GA)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Monday, February 17, 2025, at 5 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Shawn Roberts, Alvin Nelson and Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett.

A. Invocation: City Attorney

Invocation led by, Huey Spearman, Interim City Attorney

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. GUESTS:

Barbara Seidman, 515 Bay St, Waycross 31501- Spoke about precinct consolidation.

Dr Earl Martin 902 Elizabeth St, 31501- Spoke about the special election to fill the vacant seat for district 4. And the benefit of a quick election.

Kevin Adderly, 809 Darling Ave, Waycross Ga 31501- Came to say he would like to be able to vote at the City Auditorium.

Marion Adderly, 809 Darling Ave, Waycross Ga 31501- Came forward to voice her desire to have the option to vote at the city auditorium.

Eunice Dixon, 1207 Emma St, Waycross Ga 31501- Spoke about the desire to have the opportunity for District 1 to vote at the city auditorium.

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Bids:

1. WAYX 25-04 Surplus of five (5) Vehicles

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

2. WAYXL 24-05 Offer on Colley Street Property

B. Discussion Items: *SEE DISCUSSION NOTES*****

1. City of Waycross voting map update
2. District 1 voting alternate location selection
3. District 4 election dates and times
4. Commission Retreat bi-annual dates
5. Water and sewer meter update
6. Budget outline/timeline
7. Illegal dumping modification
8. MOU Recreational Programs & Services
9. Ethics Update

C. Privilege Licenses Renewals: n/a

D. Privilege Licenses:

1. Grab and Go Liquor, N. Addison, 901 Albany Ave. Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Package Sales Only.
2. K'D' Café, K. Woods, 504 Elizabeth Street, Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine, for Consumption on Premises Only.

E. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

F. Proposed Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Declare 5 City Owned Vehicles To Be Surplused Property; To Provide For Sale On GOVEDEALS.COM; and for Other Purposes

There was a consensus to place on Tuesday agenda.
2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia to Approve The Sale and Transfer of Certain Surplused Real Property Located at 1200 Colley Street Consisting of 9.09 Acres, Map & Parcel Number WZ0710 076A; and for Other Purposes.

This was tabled for discussion in Executive Session by the City Manager.

G. City Attorney Report:

H. City Managers Report:

I. Last Call

J. Adjourn to Executive Session

Motion to adjourn for the purpose of Finance was made by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett. All voted in favor and the motion passed at 6:09 pm.

K. Adjournment

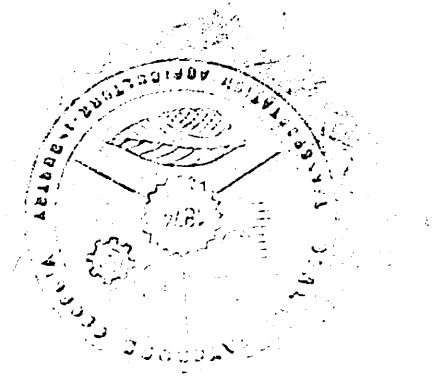
CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:

Michael Angelo James
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jacqueline Powell
JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Before we move into the actual session, Mr. Mayor, I would like to introduce the ESG. They have selected their program manager, um, effective today. Uh, Mr. Lake in here. Mr. Lake, if you would. Uh, Mr. Lake started work today as the program manager for ESG. Um, we'll meet this week sometime to lay down priorities. Um, in concerns of issues. He is familiar with the city, as you all know. Uh, he has worked for us at this time. We're looking forward to having the program manager here from Waycross. Um, I'm pretty sure that he will, uh, because he's home, take a vested interest in making things better down there. Uh, ESG. So I just wanted you to see him today. Um, do you want to say any words, Mr. Lake, or do you want to wait till you. Yeah.

SPEAKER 2: I can.

MR. LAKE/ESG: Uh, like you said, I'm. I'm here. I'm ready to get started. Uh, I've only been here two and a half days so far, but I'm looking forward to it. Um, put my best foot forward. Uh, try to learn everything I can. Do everything I can to make everything go, uh, as smooth as possible. Make everybody as happy as I can.

MAYOR: Well, we're glad you're here. And welcome.

MR. LAKE/ESG: Thank you.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. At this time, we're moving to the, uh, session. At this time, we have no traveling training scheduled at this time. We'll go ahead and move into the planning information session, starting with bids, which we have two, and they will be presented by Miss Jackson, procurement officer.

MAMIE: Mr. mayor, commissioners. Miss Jackson Hutchison has two items before you this evening. The first one is for, and I apologize. It is actually six. I'm sorry. It is actually five surplus vehicles. Or we're asking to surplus five surplus vehicles. There were six. The sixth one is actually being transferred from one department to another. So it's only five that we're asking for surplus. There were five vehicles coming from the Public Works Department. They are no longer serviceable, and we are asking that they be surplus so that we can sell them on gov deals. Thank you.

MAYOR: With that, I'll look to the commission to get a consensus. And I'll start with district one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes, sir. We have consensus.

MAMIE: The next item on the agenda is for the 1200 College Street property. This property has been owned by the city since 2001. It was approved for surplus at the April 2nd meeting of 2024. This property is approximately 9.09 acres, and it has been listed with Gateway Realty. We have received an offer on the property, and we are asking that the commission review it, and I am not sure if the commission wants to.

DUKE: Have to go to executive session for that, for that offer, and we'll do it today. Very good.

MAYOR: So for us now, this is more about information. And then we'll go into our executive session coming out of it. We'll decide as far as consenting.

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DUKE: Correct Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Okay. Very good.

DUKE: Thank you, Miss Jackson. Next, Mr. mayor, we're moving to the discussion items. Mr. mayor, the vision and the mission has not changed. And once again, I apologize for those wanting to read it. For those not familiar with the mission vision, it is on the website and the Facebook page as well. For those who doubt, who are no. Cars made the same as the mayor. Infrastructure. Services. Quality of life. City. Workforce. As far as further broken down, you remain the same. City ten-year plan still remains the same. Mr. mayor, I will highlight we have moved into the midterm. That will be the yellow arrow for those looking online. I'm going to read a few bullets out of there. Just to Premier Mayor, ask everyone what we got going on now. Um, as part of the strategy brief two years ago. Um, my two-year mark starts in March. Uh, we are implementing our updated programs, policies, ordinances, and procedures with performance tracking now. So we do have performance measures in place at this time. Of course, we're still Improving our standard based on workforce, the automation of our IT systems and programs. I think the information system director stated this summer everything should be complete without changeover and the training as well. Of course, we're still researching and trying to design a different fund infrastructure project strategy, uh, based off of our failing infrastructure. Um, as I mentioned in previous meetings, it is hard to keep up with this, but we are looking at different ways to fund it. Um, so we do have, as an example, the Corps of Engineers and GDOT going to assist us in some of this funding. So we look forward to that part. Um, when it comes available to us. And then, of course, to continue to maintain the quality delivery of city services. Um, Mr. Mayor, do you have any questions on midterm objectives?

MAYOR: Just one quick question from me, and then I'll look to the commission. And that only the question is at this point, you referred to having possibly GDOT help us with infrastructure. What is the actual place that we're getting our funding for infrastructure now for the citizens to know?

DUKE: Yeah. So from various locations, Mr. Mayor, of course, we have the SPLOST and TSPLOST to a certain degree and the Tia. Um, but as far as GDOT and this is still Pre-decisional. Uh, I did read to the commission, um, a few meetings back about them possibly doing US highway one for us. Like I said, that would save us tens of millions of dollars because they would complete the course doing the pavement and everything, but they also do the infrastructure underneath which we cannot afford to be honest with you. So, um, part of that will be going from two lane to one lane with the center turning lane. But that makes sense, as it would be identical to Albany Avenue would be the same process. When you tie in both overpasses at the end of each one of those, um, at the county city line, um, it would make things just move that much faster in the city. And once again, that would be cost free to us. moving forward and will allow us to focus funding on the tight ends on those streets. Definitely us. One you're talking about. Um, I think it's Alley Street and the other streets that will continue to have problems with, but it will give us more funding to address those areas.

MAYOR: Very good. So what you've said, just in summary, is that there are three funding streams that we're utilizing presently, one of which happens to be the splash, which is a special local option sales tax. Then the T-SPLOST, which is the transportation special local option

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sales tax, and then the TIA, which is the I believe that's dealing with our Infrastructure or Improvement Act. So that those are the important things. So just in case someone is out there not aware of how we've been doing it and what we're looking forward to doing, they can do some research from these three areas. Okay. Commissioner, I open it up. Did you have any questions? District one. Yes. District two. No, sir. And district five. No, no. Okay. Thank you.

DUKE: Thank you. Mayor. Let's move into our first agenda on discussion. Item is going to be the City of Waycross voting map update. I'm going to turn this over to the city attorney, and I'll follow up once he completes his portion of the briefing.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. Mayor and commissioners, we updated the commission at the last meeting, I believe, regarding the Supreme Court decision regarding district four. And as you know, the issue in that case was whether or not to use the 2005 voting map or the 2011 voting map. And the court ultimately decided that the 2005 voting map which was used is the one that should stand. Because the 2011 voting map had not been filed with the Secretary of State and the Clerk of Superior Court, and that that map could be used once it is appropriately filed, and this commission adopted ordinance 1107 uh, back in 2011, uh, which, uh, actually adopted that 2011 map based upon the 2010 census data. And at this juncture, in order to use the 2011 map, um, in accordance with the ordinance that was adopted by the city Commission, it would be necessary to pass a resolution, which I prepared, uh, basically re where the Commission would re adopt the 2011 map and authorize the clerk of um, of the city Commission to send that map to the Secretary of State, along with, um, a copy of the ordinance and a publisher's affidavit verifying that the notice regarding that ordinance was published in the local paper. Uh, and then also file a copy of it with the secretary. I'm sorry, with the Clerk of Superior Court. And once that is done, then the 2011 map, as it was prepared in 2011 would be operable. And then the unusual circumstance here is that the 2011 map was used between 2011 and 2023. Uh, but um, the Board of Elections went to a digital format in 2023 and asked for a digital copy of the city's map. And instead of getting the 2011 map in the format, they got the 22,005 maps in digital format. And that's how it came about, that that map was used, and the court upheld the 2011 map, because the record did not reflect that the 2011 map had gone through all of the procedures to be activated. And so at this juncture, it needs to be activated by way of a resolution by the city Commission. And then if the City Commission is inclined to do so, we'll have the clerk send it to the Secretary of State's office.

MAYOR: With that, could I ask just one question of you? I know that you said that the upheld the 2011 map, but I know you meant 2005 map. I'm sorry, 2005. Yes. And with the statement, the question I would have here is, what do you need of us tonight for us to go ahead and make sure that that is ratified by this commission and then sent to our clerk, who will then send it to the Secretary of State, and also that ordinance and affidavit will go up along with to our Clerk of Superior Court.

HUEY SPEARMAN: That is correct. We just need consensus that it will be on the agenda for tomorrow to adopt the resolution that I've already prepared.

MAYOR: So with that, I'll just ask for consensus from those that are sitting at this time. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes, sir. We have consent for it to approve your next meeting.

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DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As a follow up, we will, um. Based off of the past, we will follow up with this. Be following all meetings just to make sure everybody has an update of what these documents are.

MAYOR: So quick question for I know I'm trying to get this in my in the hearing of the people for the most part. But mainly this question is how long does it normally take for it to actually be activated? And if you're aware and if you're not, I know. I see our superintendent is here.

DUKE: I am not sure. I'm not the superintendent. Want to ask that question? If not, Mr. Mayor, I will follow up in the next trip.

CARLOS NELSON: Mr. mayor. and commissioners, um, it won't take any time. Basically, that's just the format formality that you must do. But once you approve it and you submit everything, it's approved. The state won't have to approve it or nothing. It's just filing the documents in the proper, you know, proper agencies and everything. So it'll be ready for this election coming up. Um, you know, um, you know, well, we have a special election in June or November. Everything will be in place. And if you adopt in 2011, there won't be any changes need to be made at all. No updating with the voter registration cards in there. Thank you.

MAYOR: Thank you.

DUKE: So what we'll do, Mr. Mayor. We'll just have it on the next agenda next week.

MAYOR: Very good. Thank you.

DUKE: Uh, next. Mr. mayor, we're moving to the district one voting, alternate location discussion. Um, just for those who are watching, um, the collection location has changed for multiple reasons in the past, which has caused some confusion for citizens. Current location is the county school board. I know at the last meeting; the commissioner asked me to look at both the locations being the school board and City Auditorium. I know there were some concerns with Ada compliance. There is Ada compliance at the auditorium. We are prepared to work with the election board for additional personnel to ensure that all those citizens who might be disabled or wheelchairs or those lasers can't get up our city ramps. At the same time, we also are prepared with volunteers to assist in the same manner as the county school board. I know that looking at the notes that you will County school board, there was some discussion about the location of the room, um, being not identified in a timely manner. I am prepared to work with Mr. Nelson and the school board to ensure that those areas are identified. If that's the pleasure of the commission. But at this time, we want to go ahead and decide on that location so we can start preparing for the upcoming elections. And I apologize for guidance, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

MAYOR: With that, I'm going to start I'm going to go from 5 to 1 this time. We're going to start with district five. If any comments or statements regarding that. Because right now what I'm hearing, you ask is whether we're going to allow for the county Board of Education to continue to be that space or the Waycross City Auditorium. And do you need a consent on the two tonight? That's what you're asking.

DUKE: Correct. Mr. Mayor

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MAYOR: Okay.

NELSON: So, Mr. Mayor, for clarification do we want to either be able to use the city attorney continuously or go to the Board of Education.

MAYOR: Well, it seems as if the word County Board of Education is where it has been in district one. So what we want to do is move it to City Auditorium based on the responses given by the citizens. So what we're doing now is putting it up before the commission tonight so that we can put it on our agenda for tomorrow.

NELSON: Okay. I have no objections to whatever Commissioner Roberts says. That's his district and his people's voice.

MAYOR: Very good. It sounds good. And I did that purposefully so. District one, where would you like it to be? Um.

ROBERTS: Sir, if you don't. Mind me saying.

MAYOR: And I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Um, I didn't take this Job to try to take anything from district one. If anything, I tried to take this job to help district one. And with that being said, I did see someone fall in the parking lot. And I think to, uh, to really to keep the confusion down, I believe it would be best if we went to the City Auditorium. And again, I would say that I'm not trying. To take anything. From district one. If we can find somewhere in the future, if could really help district one, we could do that. But for right now, let's go to Seat Auditorium. Make it easy. And if anybody need a ride, if anybody need any help, My team. We are more than willing to help get you to the polls and help you to any kind of way that we can. So I would like to say, with that being said, I will say we're going to the city auditorium.

MAYOR: Would you sing that then? I asked district two to consent to what you said and district five as well.

BENNETT: Oh yes, sir. Absolutely.

MAYOR: Absolutely. And district five?

NELSON: Yes. Thank you.

MAYOR: With that being said, Mister Manager, we can go ahead and make it known that tomorrow's vote will possibly be toward going to the city auditorium.

DUKE: Thank you, Mister Mayor. As stated earlier, we are prepared to assist all voters that go to the city auditorium if they have any Ada compliance needs or requirements and working alongside the Elections board. Uh, next, Mister Mayor, we're moving to the third discussion, which will be 2 to 4 support special election dates at this time. I read off the dates for the commission and those who might be watching. Hopefully they can see the slide. Option one election day will be 17th June. Advance voting will be 16th May through 13th June. If we need a runoff will be 15th July. Registration deadline for all those running will be 1982. Election

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day will be 16th September. Advanced voting will be August 20th 25th August 12th September with a runoff on 14th October. References. Deadline will be 18th August 23rd November. Advance voting 13th October 1st of October one 2nd of December. Registration date will be 6th October 2025. These are the three dates. Mr. mayor. Commission. Of course. I would recommend excluding September date time frame because he's too close to the actual November election. Um, and, you know, because he's out of cycle, we'll be paying for this election. Um, and right now, the closest date would be 17th June. Um, if we do a special election.

DUKE: I'll pause there for consideration.

MAYOR: So we're going to look to the commission and get their recommendation. Option one, which would be election date, the 17th of June. Option two would then be 16th of September. Option three would be the 4th of November.

MAYOR: Is there a suggestion from Commissioner?

NELSON: Yeah, I have no problem with it being option one.

MAYOR: Okay. Option one has been chosen by district five. District two.

BENNETT: Options three.

MAYOR: Option three and district one.

ROBERTS: Can I get a response? Mr. Mayor.

ROBERTS: Okay. Yes. Um, you know, I'm new to coming to this seat. And with all respect for Diane Hopkins, I feel like that she was very outspoken. And I feel like, um, when we had this thing when it came to a vote. Uh, Diane. Commissioner Hopkins, I'm sorry. With all due respect, Commissioner Hopkins was up here among us, and she made the decision when it came to a vote to not vote for it. So I feel with all due respect for her and all the hard work that she has done to. I take option three.

MAYOR: Option three by two commission. And option one by one.

MAYOR: Since there is no even split, I have no concept of any sort. So we're at a standstill here. Do we need another commissioner?

DUKE: I understand, Mr. Mayor. I would recommend, uh, can we still vote to put this on the agenda? We can.

MAYOR: Put it on the agenda.

DUKE: For tomorrow. And then at that time, hopefully, we have a full commission to go, and then we can kind of go from there to just put this to rest. And I understand all the, um, observations and recommendations and considerations by the current commissioner staff.

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MAYOR: And so rather than to give an option right here, what I will propose to the Commission is that we confer and or consent to have it on tomorrow's agenda, and Okay, we'll make the decision then. So I start with district one.

ROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: District two? To place on the Agenda for tomorrow.

BENNETT: Yes.

MAYOR: And district five.

NELSON: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: Okay.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: We'll be on the agenda for tomorrow.

DUKE: Uh, Mr. Mayor, we're moving to the Commission Retreat dates. As you know, Mr. Mayor, we selected the dates last year, April 12th and October 10th to 11th. Those are both Friday and Saturdays from one to let the commission know now so everyone can prepare for those dates coming up. And these will be consistent with the best we have moving forward. Uh, all directors are aware of these dates, and we are committed to these dates, and we shouldn't have a problem. Alright. Now, is it with the GMA? And I'm scheduled to facilitate us for those dates.

MAYOR: And each of those dates will be on a on Friday and Saturday.

DUKE: Correct.

MAYOR: Okay. Do you need consent for that?

DUKE: I would like a consent. Yes, Mr.

MAYOR: Okay! With that, I'll go to each district. District one.

ROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: District two.

BENNETT: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: And district five.

NELSON: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: Okay. We have consent.

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DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor. Water and sewer meeting update. And this is going to be quite lengthy, Mr. Mayor, so I won't read all of the bullets. Um, the commissioners, you have a copy of the letter that I sent. Uh, reference all of these dates and the action that we have done over the last two years. Uh, with the meters and for the citizens watching, we'll be. The video should be up. Um, as well as the notes. If you have concerns about what they're doing with the meters. But, uh, I'll briefly summarize this. So, uh, a lot of we've been sliding this, as you know, we've had a meter problem, uh, since 2016, when the meters started failing. Uh, we made some decisions to go with a company to replace those meters. Um, that company in turn, um, bankrolled pretty much running the business at the time. Um, from 2017 pretty much to 2020, we were back and forth, uh, about trying to get the issue resolved. Um, which we could not get it resolved. And you can see that some of the numbers roughly, we had, uh, 1500 to 2000m, um, not reading, um, pretty much every read. So we had a lot of rereads and we had some other issues, um, with staffing because we had to go out there and do hard reads with personnel. So, you know, this has been a long battle. Um, for a few years now.

DUKE: I'll leave it up for a little bit longer. Mr. mayor, if everybody read, um, anybody watching those in here watching as well. And just for clarification, the question was asked. Um, we did Consider suing Ferguson Um, as far as going out of business, but once, you know, they declared bankrupt could not sue them and our contract was not with the mall, it was with Ferguson. That's why we could not take them to court. Our next piece of this is kind of talking about some other things that were done, um, recently here. Um, and it really is going over all the things that Ferguson and Mueller said they would do. Um, of course they have not lived up to those expectations. Um, it's been a complete failure. Um, we've done a lot of things. I will give, um, some recommendations of some shout outs to the ESG operations, uh, because they've done a lot of work trying to fix these replacing repeaters, uh, transmitters swapping meters out. But unfortunately, you know, just have a lot of bad meters. Eventually we did end up doing some pilots. Um, that's where we are currently right now, um, with some pilots. And they have been working right now, but we're still not sure if that's going to fix the total problem. Because if we go to these new meters where the good thing is if you go to them, they can tie into Georgia. Georgia Power's backbone. Um, as far as reading, which is going to be a lot healthier for us. Um, it will cost some money that I mentioned a while back. Uh, I think that cost us down these lines, but I think it was \$68,000, um, to ride on the backbone of Georgia Power's, uh, uh, data system. So that's one thing that we'll have to consider if we go with these new meters. Um, and once again, it's a given data of what's been going on over the last, um, definitely the last two years. When I got here, uh, we started doing a lot of media swapping, um, and to, to the public. We tried every scenario possible. We took working meters and put them in known bad media locations. Like I said, we talked about transmitters and towers. Um, we swapped out batteries. Uh, we did what we could do to kind of figure out what was going on. But, um, at the end of the day, the meetings provided and the backup meetings they provide. They just don't work for whatever reason. So we are to this point now to where we are, um, with this current trial and, um, with this test period, it's going to need a few more months to get tested. And once we get that data, we'll decide to go with these new meters.

MAYOR: Okay.

DUKE: Let's go into more detail, Mr. Mayor, about I say again to that last bullet there if people want to know. So on January 29th, we begin the pilot meter study with some new media

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company. Uh, they can rent on Georgia Power's network or when they fix the basic infrastructure. So, like I said, um, we know that Georgia Power's network that works. So, um, so that means ideally or theoretically, our media should work on their system. So, uh, and that, that cost I mentioned earlier, that's a onetime cost. And after that, you know, the maintenance charges. So, um, right now, um, once this pilot is done, I'm going to come back to the commission. I think we want to go this way. Um, because this fixes the problem. Uh, moving forward, I know, um, for our citizens, uh, it has been a long, um, it's been it's been a long, long-time problem. Right now. I understand their frustration, uh, with some of their bills. Uh, also, once we get that software updated, uh, it'll help out with this as well, because we have more capabilities. Um, as far as reading meters and identifying and letting customers know if they have leaks and things of that nature. The next thing here, Mr. Mayor, excuse me, I paused. Do you have any questions on the history or the commission?

MAYOR: I think we are aware of it. We've been struggling with this quite some time now, and as you made note of and alluded to, it's been since 2016.

DUKE: So with that said, mayor, um, I am requesting to send this letter out. Um, one of my biggest, most time-consuming ways for me is talking to customers about their meeting situation, especially when their bills are probably more than they expected them to be. So what I want to tell citizens we did identify our problems. So when the meetings don't necessarily when they start working, we have been doing a recharge. And that can be confusing, um, to our customers because they're actually using more water than what they're paying for. But because we can't really because he doesn't work, we can't really prove that. So we're giving them that base rate charge, which typically, uh, it's going to be around when you put that in, I'll make sure it's in the letter, um, roughly around about \$62. And the problem comes along is when the meter does start working, of course, that that charge is going to quadruple sometimes. So I want to do is send these letters out just to make those customers aware who own the basic rate right now. And that's probably about I'm not sure the exact number, but it's somewhere we have about 7000 customers. It's probably about 2000 on that base rate. I just want them to know what this means when you're getting the same bill every month. Does that mean you're using that amount of water? You're probably using more. But we have to charge you the base rate because the media doesn't work. So it is a big problem and it is confusing. And once the meter start working, it does cause a lot of problems for the citizens. So, um, we're going to send this letter out. And for those watching, I just asked, you know, for your grace on this, like I said, it's been a problem for a long time. I think we finally got it figured out. Um, but with that, once the meters start working, your bill is probably going to come up. Probably not the problem. They're going to go up because you have been using excess water. So I have asked my team to kind of go back and give a water strategy out to everyone and let you know this amount of gallons, even though we have that list on the website, um, for your half inch to an inch meter, how much? I think a thousand gallons should run. I don't think everybody's familiar with that. And we're going to try to show the general public what a thousand gallons really means. Um, that means you're taking 18 channels a day or whatever, and that way customers can have a better understanding of their charges and our policy. Any questions?

SPEAKER 2: Commissioners, have any questions of district one?

ROBERTS: No, sir.

MAYOR: District two.

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BENNETT: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: District five.

NELSON: No, sir. You covered it. Good.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And like I said, we'll get that these letters out hopefully next week. And then, of course, we'll follow back up with the commission once we decide to decide on the new meters. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we'll move into the budget outline timeline update. Of course, this is, uh, my area and the finance director's area. So beginning March, it will be director input. Um, that's when I meet with the directors, sit down, and discuss their budget needs. And then 17 to 20 1st of March, that's when me and the finance director will sit down and do our input. I am making a few changes this year. Um, as I mentioned before, with the commission about, uh, life cycle and ordering stuff, put it in the budget already right now? Um, and things of that nature. So we don't keep getting caught up paying the emergency prices. So you'll see a little bit of adjustment in the budget this year. It'll be a different line item in there kind of discussing, um, certain parts, various parts for equipment. And we'll go ahead and purchase regardless of if we have an issue or not. We're going to purchase those items every month just to back home.

DUKE: And the same time you're going to see another line item that's going to be more catered to our contracted personnel on their spending as well. And I won't go into detail here about that with our partners, whether we have to do a better job of managing invoices outside of the regular contracted, um, the regular agreed upon contract, but you're going to see a different line up for that to just kind of to distinguish the two, for us to kind of better track where our money goes, where the money goes. Then, Mr. Mayor, on the 20th, 22nd of April, uh, as we reported a while back, I will provide a code update. Um, we should be able to tell by that time once we get the sales tax in and property tax in about to call update for the workforce and we'll do a separate briefing for that. And that's kind of 10th right now. But that's the date that we chose.

DUKE: And then 23rd April sixth and May 19th May all ten of dates right now. But those will be the actual budget presentation dates to the commission. And then we'll be asking for the budget vote on the 20th of May right before the commission meeting. I want to get those dates out now so everybody kind of can be make sure that they are present for those meetings. And once again, Mr. Mayor, we'll be sticking within the charter, um, charter timeline. Um, but I feel like by doing the budget, um, a little bit different this year, you will be getting updates on during this process. So once we get once, me and myself sit down, me and the finance director sit down, uh, with the directors, you'll get a budget book then. And then we'll kind of update it to each section. And last name is not mentioned on here, but we are going to put together a list of all our spending to back the audit so that all sides can see any purchases over \$10,000, and it's going to be quite lengthy. So I'm trying to, um, maybe combine some stuff. So I'm going to use pipe as an example. So we spent, you know, \$800,000 on pipes last year. You will see that line item we spent versus we spent \$10,000 on a 12-inch pipe, \$8,000 on a ten-inch pipe, if that makes sense. But we want full transparency this year with the budget to show, um, we want to make sure every dollar goes, um, because I'm not going to be able to show the \$2 you might spend on, um, the water back here for the meetings, but I definitely want to show all our big purchases to the citizens so they can be aware of how the money is spent. And it should line

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up with the clean audit that we just passed, um, last month, and I paused it, Mr. Mayor, for any questions on that?

MAYOR: I Don't have a question, but just one quick suggestion for those dates that you have listed there. If you could have the administrator, send invites so that each one of the commissions and anyone who will be a facilitator or a functionary for this be able to hit that invite and it goes onto their calendars. That'll keep us from having individuals saying they didn't know.

SPEAKER 13: Correct Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: And that's all I have.

DUKE: Okay. And, Mr. Mayor, on any of my notes, I forgot to mention this with the commissioners are okay. I would like to maybe video some of this to let the system know how we do the budget discussions with some of the directors, just to give them a clue. Um, it is a very detailed discussion. Um, of course, those numbers won't be solid until you all vote, but I think just based off of Waycross one on one, it would be very important for them to really understand how much work goes to this budget. Um, so if the commission is okay with that, I mean, maybe live streaming some of those sessions. I would like to do that as well.

MAYOR: I can do is ask for consent for live streaming the budget process. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. I think it's a great idea. You have to say.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. We're moving to the illegal dumping modification update. Uh, Mr. Mayor, if you're aware, a few months ago, we had an issue at the. At the end of my track of thought at the, uh, I think it's.

MAYOR: The lift station.

DUKE: It's the lift station. I want to make sure I say the correct one. It's the one-off of US highway one. Uh, Mr. Mayor. Commission. Uh, if you remember, we had a, um, I guess a confusion about what could be done there just for some background. Uh, Still the water and sewer gave a permit to a user to dump because one of my friends lost power within the city and they wanted them. And just being up front. We talked about this before they dumped it, the wrong site, which was past the meter. And we can make a lot about that story. But just to prevent all that moving forward, I'm asking to modify the contract with the water sewer region and make all dumping come to the water treatment plant. Um, I can make that on my own, but I wanted to present to the commission that I can know what's going on. As far as that, I think this will prevent any, any misunderstanding or confusion or whatever. And moving forward, uh, some of our lift stations are unsecure. Um, some do have gates around them, some do not. Um, so I know, um, looking at social media and just talking to certain citizens that we do maybe have some other issues going on with illegal dumping. I think this way, at least the city we protect ourselves by making anybody who's, uh, has a permit to us or working with us. Come to the water treatment plant to do their dumping. And I apologize for any questions on that.

MAYOR: Any questions? Commissioner? I don't think I can say is that this just keeps us in compliance with EPD and EPA.

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DUKE: Oh, it definitely does, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Okay.

MAYOR: Good, good, good.

DUKE: All right, Mr. Mayor. Next. Mr. Mayor, we're moving to an MOU for recreational programs and services. Um, Mr. Mayor, this was brought to the commission body last year, and I don't have a slide on it. You should have a copy of, um, received a copy of the MOU. Uh, basically, with the county letting us know they would no longer provide service to the two parks, or they wish not to provide services to those two parks that they negotiated with doing a loss negotiation as well as the swimming pool. Um, at this time, um, we cannot pick up those two parks or that swimming pool. Um, we don't have the funding to repair the pool. I know it's been mentioned that the pool has been repaired. Um, I have not seen that yet. If I do see it, I will get back with the commission. But as far as funding for the programs in the parks, um, you know, we can't pick up extra staff. I mean, so, um, I don't know at this time what to do. Um, we can I can meet back with the county manager and discuss further, maybe develop a different type of plan. Um, a joint plan, if you like. But we just can't simply pick that up. Um, uh, especially when it was discussed on the loss. That would be the split.

MAYOR: Okay, just a quick statement here. When we've already negotiated and we've already made those plans, then it's kind of it's not kind of it is a situation there that someone is not keeping their end of the bargain. And we need to do what we're supposed to do. On the other side of that same note, we're going to need to have probably more meetings with County so that we can have at least a quarterly meeting, if not quarterly, a biannual meeting where we'll come in and talk and go back over some of these things. It's almost like people in general when you chastise a child. Not that I'm chastising anyone, but if you chastise a child, that child does well for a while. Then after a period of time, they go back to their old behaviors. Then you have to go back and read chastise. In this case, we do know that we had already made these discussions. We've already had these decisions made. And so I would suggest that you, as the city manager, talk to the county manager, being that he's new, that he may be made aware of what is a previous statement in our negotiations, and they need to keep their end of the bargain until there's a ten year bargain. So I don't know if we need to have our attorneys along with you and the county manager talking about these things, but there needs to be something done in that regard. And that's all I have for that because I'm thinking if we keep doing these kinds of things, it'll go from this to something else with SDS or something else that a service delivery? Service that we have. So we do want to make sure that whatever we've said before, we keep our bar. Your word is your bond.

DUKE: So what I'll do is I'll circle back to the county manager and concur in your point about maybe doing a joint meeting with the county as well as the school board. We do have some other items that need to be discussed, right? The overpasses and a few other things that continue to come up that we have not addressed as a community yet. So that might be a good time to discuss all of that with the citizens. So they know that we all are tracking the same information and the same dates and times of those services that we have planned to come for our citizens. So I will follow up with him this week. Mr. Mayor, and I'll follow back up with the commission at the next meeting when we discuss it.

MAYOR: Very good.

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DUKE: Uh, next. Mr. mayor, we go on to the ethics update. Um, we have two, two items here. Um, of course, the draft letter for the Sanders family and then the ethics case 2024 001. And Mr. Mayor, what I'll do I'm going to go ahead and provide a draft letter to the commission for consideration. I hope you can read that. If not, I can read it to you. Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: Dear Sanders family, the city of Waycross sincerely apologizes for any and all disrespect displayed to your family and the memory of Kennedy. It was not our intent to make mention of the Sanders family name during our annual budget meetings. We recognize that multiple questions surrounding the use of the City Auditorium by select commissioners were perceived as disrespectful and should have been executed in a more caring and professional manner. Your family made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation, and such sacrifice should never be pulled into what appeared as unprofessional and political. The City of Waycross We'll learn from this moment and do better moving forward, living up to the life and values displayed by Kennedy and honor her memory accordingly. Additionally, we have discussed our actions internally and agreed as the governing body to never act in such a manner again and to adhere to the same decorum we ask of all citizens. The City of Waycross will update the Sergeant Sanders proclamation and pass additional resolutions that specify the activities associated with the City of Waycross. Sergeant Sanders remembrance. The City of Waycross again apologizes for its actions in dishonoring the Sanders family's name. We hope in time you can find it in your hearts to accept our apologies and continue to work with us in creating a better and more perfect Waycross.

DUKE: Mr. Mayor that's the letter. The draft letter. If the Commissioner Commission most changes. They can make them now or let me know at a later date. And as soon as we get approved for this letter, we will be able to let it out to the center and out to Santa Barbara to let us in person to the Sanders family, um, at a date to be selected in the near future. And I posted up for guidance on that, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: What I would suggest to the commission, we can either go ahead now and acknowledge this letter as what we will be sending to the family, and we can get a district one, two and five vote tonight. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes, sir. We can send this out. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

DUKE: And, uh, the other item on the agenda, Mr. Mayor, is the case. I'm going to refer this to the city attorney for his remarks.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. mayor, commissioners, this is in reference to case number 2024 001. Clayton Nelson versus Katrina Felder. Felder. Excuse me. As you know, the Board of Ethics recommended that, well, first of all, they decided that there was a violation of the code of ethics by the respondent. Miss Felder, and then they made a recommendation for prosecution in the city court. And this commission considered that recommendation on at your January 7th meeting. And a majority of the Commission voted to accept the recommendation of the Board of Ethics and refer the matter to city court. Now, since that time, we've been working on preparing the file for transfer to the City Court. We have prepared the order that we will ask the mayor to sign, transfer the case to city court, and the bulk of the time has been spent putting together all of the documents, all of the exhibits, all of the transcripts of every hearing. Because everything that occurred during this case has to be transferred to superior. I'm sorry to the city court. And I met with Mr. Marquis, the assistant city clerk, today, and we spent about an hour

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just going through all of the documents that he's been working on for several weeks now, and it's probably about six inches thick, and it's going to get thicker because we have some additional documents to put, uh, put in the packet. And, uh, but we expect that within the next 2 or 3 days, we'll have everything finalized and ready to transfer to the city court. And we will provide a copy, uh, to, to the commission, and a copy will be on file with the clerk's office as well.

MAYOR: And for us tonight, what would you need for us to. I do new node. Once all of those documents have been compiled, it'll be just my job to sign.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Yes, that is correct. This is just an update. And? And you're correct.

DUKE: In this matter, the commission is still having further questions on it. Commissioner, did you have any questions regarding this?

MAYOR: Hearing none.

SPEAKER 8: We move forward. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we'll go ahead and move into the rest of the items. You have no proof of license renewals. We're going to have two privileged licenses. That's grab and go and K'D's Cafe. We have no code ordinance at this time. We're going to have two resolutions for proposal as a surplus property that we discuss and the sale of property, as well as the, uh, the voting matter. So, we have three resolutions.

DUKE: And I will turn it over to the City Attorney

MAYOR: Very good.

HUEY SPEARMAN: No further report, Mr. Mayor. Thank you,.

MAYOR: Mr. City Manager. Do you have a report?

DUKE: I do, Mr. Mayor I want to, um, say a couple of things in my city manager's report. Um, you gave me great feedback on the one on one, um, discourse that we had here recently. Uh, these are the main two, um, comments I received. Uh, of course we it was too much for one week, I think you attended. So you got that feedback while you were there, and then the budget was not discussed enough during the presentation. I will say to the commission, um, of course, we know one week is going to be I said at the beginning, I'm not going to get, uh, full understanding of everything. We tried to give a brief overview of the day. INS and outs. Um, pretty much operation. I think we did achieve that, but I fully understand, um, these two, these two concerns. Uh, one way to address both of them is we're going to go back and

look at some of the information that we provided, and maybe either just send out some white papers for citizens to kind of review, um, prior to coming to the course. And, and it's going to be every quarter and the second with the, with the budget. I think once we start this current budget process of maybe, um, last year, some of those discussions is to give them feedback on how the budget works. At the same time, for those who attended the course, they did get a set of notes. And they looked at, I mean, a set of slides. If you look at the notes, everything was in the notes that, uh, maybe should have been discussed in detail, definitely in the budget. And I'll pause there for any questions on that. Mr. mayor.

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MAYOR: I just understand you're saying this is a high-level overview, and that's pretty much what we needed to do. When you give it to the people, they're not going to get everything that's going to be given in somewhat of a not a deep dive, but you at least swimming pool.

DUKE: And that's a good point to Mr. Mayor, because we did get some good feedback on some concerns from our citizens, on some of our charter definitions and verbiage, which we'll we'll try to address over this next year and then got some feedback with other operations in the city. Um, as far as communication, why some things are not being picked up as fast as we would like it to be either. Um, I will say this to everyone right now. Again, the app is the fastest way to talk to, um, the city, period. Almost anything else? Um, once you put your information in the app, it just goes to the person who's going to deal with it. And I mean, I will see it. Some of the commission will see it. We all see it, but it goes to the person who's going to actually execute the operations. So like a pothole, it's getting done that same day. Um, versus maybe you call through me, it might take an extra time. action. So I just encourage citizens to go download that, that app and really learn how it works, because it is a great tool for you to get questions answered as well, and then get things done that in the past might have took, um, longer than it used to. So, uh, next, Mr. Mayor, um, I think maybe Commissioner Nelson asked about, um, to start looking at the floss. Um, I did. Um, it is more complicated than I thought. Um, um, because it's really another property tax relief. Um, if you don't have the freeze in place, I'm not sure how it benefits. Um, where I'm going to get, uh, with the Tax Commission assessor's office and kind of get a better understanding. Um, because at the time, I thought we could actually benefit from it. But like I said, right now, I don't see how we benefit from using it, even 1%. Um, because it has a specific use, it has to be done for. But this is like a once again, a general understanding. I am trying to research the whole aspects of it. I get with people a little bit smarter than me on this, and I come back at the next meeting with a better update, but I know this was asked before. I just wanted to let you know I am up. I am researching it. Um, it's just a little more complicated than I thought. Um, or maybe not complicated, but what is envisioned for is other, uh, like us. It's other things in place that do inhibit it from being properly utilized. So I'll pause there for any questions on my report. Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: Just a quick note about the floating local option sales tax. We've had some conversation around this with the 537 cities. And one of the things that we've been having difficulty with is understanding this House bill, as it's changing and it while it's sitting on the desks. So that's another space that we're having. But we do have lobbyists and also persons standing on our behalf in the legislature. One of the thoughts that was shared with us, and I can share this in just in conjunction with your presentation. And that is that even if both of them. Say, for instance, these frozen portions are done, even if we did the same thing, if we

allowed for the other one, whichever is better for the city is the one that will be enacted, is what they told us. Correct. But on the other side of that, that would have to be the citizens decision. But we will decide up here. And that's why we're having these public hearings so that we don't get railroaded later down the street. So the better route to take is possibly to either opt in or opt out. That's what they say. If you want to opt in, you don't have to make any decisions. If you opt out, you do have to have public hearings. So in our case, if we were to choose not to have, say, the third hearing to opt out and get automatically out of here.

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DUKE: And one thing I would like to highlight this. And it's in the small print. But just even with discussing with Cros one on one, you know, our city operations are based off of taxation and I think we do have a level of expectations. So any time we I know citizens want low taxes, low utilities and all those things, but at the same time we do that, then operations is going to it's going to deter to I mean, it's part of it. And I think everybody has to understand that. Um, moving forward as we go down this road, because like you said, Mr. Mayor, the other house bills coming down, they provide some tax reliefs. But and that's and that's fine. I fully understand our elected officials doing that. But the city is not in any kind of way to generate money. So when we start doing that, then I just need everybody to understand you will get a, uh, a like I said, service, but services will decline as part of it. So I just hope everybody truly understands this.

MAYOR: I definitely understand what you're saying. I mean, when it comes to this, if we don't have the funding coming in, it keeps us at a certain size or diminishes us. But if we have the funding coming in, we have the ability to grow and to do other things. But thank you so much for your report.

DUKE: This completes the agenda items and the discussion items. Um, we do need to go in executive session to discuss the final motion.

MAYOR: To go into executive session.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. mayor, before you do that, may I consult with the manager about something he may want to bring to your attention?

MAYOR: Yes, sir.

DUKE: Uh, this man I forgot, we do have a Wednesday with that final meeting for House Bill 581. We have. When we do, we'll make a vote then. Um, what y'all want to do? So, we won't have anything else after that.

MAYOR: Exactly.

DUKE: Yes, ma'am. And we haven't had anybody show up out of the city right now to eat any of the meetings. We did have some social media presence as far as questions we did about a lot of information. I felt to our citizens. We did answer some questions that we could answer, um, based on what we knew. Um, I think the county has opted out, and I want to say the school board as well. Um, they read the writing there. I mean, we probably all got together and discussed all this, but, you know, um, that would be the last meeting, and

hopefully some citizens will come and just, you know, just ask questions. Um, because like I said, as we stated, the other House bill's coming down that, um, are very important to them as far as their property taxes. And thank you, Miss City Attorney.

HUEY SPEARMAN: So, he's announcing a call meeting essentially after that, uh, hearing. Call meetings tomorrow at I'm sorry, at six.

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MAYOR: All right. So, we can entertain a motion for executive session and only this executive session. Is it personnel or what is it?

DUKE: It's going to be financed to discuss that.

MAYOR: Okay. Do you have a motion. Is there a second?

BENNETT: Second.

MAYOR: You have a motion. And second. There's motion from Commissioner Nelson. Second from Commissioner Bennett. All in favor, say aye. Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries. We are now in executive session. Thank you, everyone, for coming. Thank.