



**MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2025 – 5:00 PM
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Monday, February 4, 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, Katrena Felder and Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett.

A. Invocation: City Attorney

Invocation was led by Interim City Attorney, Huey Spearman

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. City Clerk to Read Section 2-66 (a) – Decorum.

Read by Greg Smith, Finance Director

D. Request Motion to Approve Agenda

Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

II. PUBLIC REMARKS ON OFFICIAL ACTIONS

III. EXECUTIVE DUTIES:

A. Employee of the Month:

The Employee of the Month presentation was presented by the City Manager to Dawn Strickland.

B. Maulding & Jenkins CPA's - Trey Scott *SEE DISCUSSION NOTES*****

IV. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

A. City Manager's Report

B. Mayor's Report (To Include Any Public Service Announcements).

V. CONSIDERATION OF OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

A. Consent Calendar:

1. Approval of Minutes: n/a
2. Ordinance Second Readings: n/a
3. Privilege License Renewals: n/a

There wasn't anything to consent to

B. Privilege Licenses:

1. Los Compadres Mexican Taqueria LLC, J. Gonzalez, 602 Pendleton St. Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer and Wine Consumption on Premises Only.
2. Tipsys Inc., S. Patel, 1269 #B Ossie Davis Pkwy, Waycross, GA 31501, Beer, Wine, and Liquor, Package Sales Only.

C. Bids: n/a

D. Ordinances:

1. An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Waycross, Georgia, and the Zoning Map; To Rezone the Property Described Herein Located at Brunel Street at Howe Street and Haines Avenue, Parcel WA1203 035 from C-2 Highway Commercial To R-50 Residential; to Set An Effective Date; To Declare an Emergency Second Reading; To Repeal Conflicting Ordinances; and for Other Purposes.
1st Reading:
There was a motion to approve by Commissioner Felder, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, All voted in favor and the motion passed.
2nd Reading:
There was a motion to approve by Commissioner Felder, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. All voted in favor and the motion passed

E. Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia Approving Change To Voting Precinct for Residents of District 1 In All Municipal Elections to the C.C. McCray City Auditorium, 865 Pendleton Street, Waycross, Georgia, and for Other Purposes.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS TABLED*

2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia Accepting and Approving the Annual financial and Audit Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024; and for Other Purposes.

There was a motion to approve by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett. All voted in favor and the motion passed

3. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia to Approve Services Agreement Between the Waycross Area Shelter for Abused Persons, Inc, D/B/A Magnolia House and the City of Waycross, Georgia to Assign a Police Officer to Serve as a Full-Time Sergeant-Investigator Stationed at the Waycross Family Justice Center; and for Other Purposes.

There was a motion to approve by Mayor Pro Temp, Bennett, seconded by Shawn Roberts. All voted in favor and the motion passed

VI. LAST CALL and/or ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. ADJOURNMENT

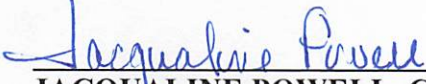
There was a motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:59pm.

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:


MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:


JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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MAYOR: At this time, we will hear the reading of the decorum by our City clerk reading sections 266.

GREG SMITH: Yes. As the mayor said. Section two Dash 66. Decorum. The mayor, commissioners, staff and citizens in attendance shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner except when specifically authorized by the mayor. All remarks, comments and questions shall be directed to the mayor and not to individual commissioners, staff or citizens in attendance. A commissioner, staff or citizen in attendance shall not speak at a meeting until the Commissioner, staff or citizen attendance has been recognized by the mayor and granted permission to speak or ask a question. All comments or questions made by the Commissioner, staff or citizens in attendance shall address the motion that is being discussed or be pertinent to the agenda item before the Commissioner. Any and all personal remarks. Comments or questions are inappropriate. The mayor shall enforce these rules of decorum. If a commissioner believes that a rule has been broken, said commissioner can raise a point of order. A second is not required. The mayor can rule on the question, or the mayor can allow the commissioners to debate the issue and decide the issue by a majority vote. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. At this time, we are going to ask that the commission look at your agenda and we'll entertain a motion.

ROBERTS: Mr. Mayor, uh, if you don't mind, resolution E1.

Resolution E1.

ROBERTS: Yes, sir. If you don't mind some concerns from district one. Uh, we'd like to have a little more time on that if you don't mind, sir.

MAYOR: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Mr. Mayor, if I can. I think the request was made. Um, the, uh, auditorium is not fully Ada compliant for some of our older citizens, and I think they want to find an alternate location that's Ada compliant for those voters in district one. District one does have the greatest amount of, uh, elderly citizens. Uh, that's what's been the hiccup, um, through the years. Um, so I think, uh, what I, what I would do, I would try to find an alternate location. Um, I would get with the school superintendent and see. Um, I know last voting. They had a small room. It was kind of confusing. Um, we'll do a better job working with the, uh, with the voter's commission about finding the proper location to make sure we identified it early enough so the citizens can find it and get to it when it's time to vote.

MAYOR: Okay. So, what I'll do here is entertain the motion. And the motion has been made. Or there should be a motion in just a moment. A motion in a second. And in the conversation with the discussion, then we can remove this one item from the agenda. Okay.

If there's a motion with that amendment, that would be great.

NELSON: I move for Approval, Mr. Mayor. Okay.

MAYOR: There's a motion for approval. Is there a second?

BENNETT: Second

MAYOR: Okay, there's a second for the motion to receive the agenda with the removal of resolution E1. We'll move into voting. All in favor? Aye. Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries. The agenda is approved with the removal of E1 resolution. At this time, do we have any public remarks on official actions?

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SMITH: Yes, we've got All guest Mr. Hargrove wants to speak about resolutions. Mr. Hargrove, if you'll come forward.

MAYOR: Is there a specific resolution that he's responding to?

SMITH: I don't have that information.

MAYOR: Okay. It would have to be something that's on the agenda.

GUEST: I'd like to speak on the docket regarding resolutions, the addition, changing or deletion of resolutions, which is on the which is on tonight's docket. And since you've just changed one, I'm assuming that's fine.

MAYOR: And I look to the attorney for any conversation regarding.

MAYOR: So, he needs to give his name and address.

GUEST: Name Michael Hargrove, 2012 Ellis Street in Waycross.

CITY ATTORNEY: Let me. Let me be absolutely sure. May I ask Mr. Hargrove a question? Mr. Hargrove, are you speaking about an item that's already on the printed agenda?

GUEST: I'm speaking about resolutions which are on the agenda. But maybe give you a little background on that.

CITY ATTORNEY: Which resolution are you speaking about?

GUEST: The changing of the district information. District one. Okay. And the related information.

SMITH: Yeah. Mr. Hargrove, you've got three minutes. Thank you. You're welcome.

GUEST: Uh, a little background information first.

Georgia elections code statute 20 12-5 hundred for special primary upon death. Section B, whenever any person is elected to municipal office, shall, after taking office, die. And I leave a piece out here or any other reason for vacancy in that office, the governing authority shall thereupon call a special election to fill such vacancy.

CITY ATTORNEY: Mr. mayor. Point of order.
He's not at all on. On topic.

GUEST: Well, you've got resolutions on the agenda items. Correct? And I'm speaking about a resolution that wasn't presented tonight. And I want to know why.

MAYOR: Oh, no. No, there cannot be a discussion.

GUEST: So, the point being, Mr. Georgia election code calls out.

MAYOR: We can't do that. No, sir It's not. Maybe it shall. No.

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GUEST: So, you're stopping me, right?

MAYOR: Yes, sir. When I hit the gavel, that means you. You have no right to talk after that point. Thank you very.

GUEST: That's fine I'll take it up on my Facebook page.

MAYOR: That's fine. Very, very good, very good. First amendment rights are always useful. Thank you very much. Let's move forward. All right. So, we have at this time we're moving to the executive duties. And we have the employee of the month.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. It is time. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce the employee of the month, uh, Miss Mrs. Don Strickland. And before I do, Mr. Mayor, I didn't prepare any remarks. Um, because if I did, I would be very long winded. But Miss Strickland and I want to make sure I got up here. Got up in here. Very good. Uh, because she is working overtime right now by just being here. Just kidding. It's not over time, but, uh. So, a few things about miss. Miss about Don. Don, uh, since my arrival here has been instrumental in my grasp and my learning of the city of Waycross. She is a walking, uh, literary walking computer on everything here. Um, infrastructure wise and funding wise, I can put on the spot right now and ask her what happened in 1976 on College Street. Uh, house for 38. And I'm pretty sure you want. You want to tell them? No, I'm pretty sure. What? She could do it. That's how. That's how impressive she is. And she's actually been a lifesaver in many situations here with the city. Uh, when I came in, I was not aware of some of our funding challenges that we had and a few other things that she stays abreast on. Um, viciously, to make sure that we get that money. Um, that we need to do our jobs effectively. So, like I said, she's a great asset. I'm not sure, um, what we're going to do without her when she does decide to retire. Um, I haven't found a way to download her computer yet. That's new. I haven't found a way to, uh, download everything she has stored. Hopefully she'll write a book for us and leave it here on my desk so I can continue to look like I know everything, but, uh, I'm very proud of her. Um, I'm proud of the whole team here. And she's just a direct reflection of all the great, uh, employees in this workforce. Uh, they do so much for this city, uh, every day. And it's, uh, we can't never state or understate, uh, how much they bring to the city. So that's it. I want to introduce to you the employee of the month, Miss Donna Strickland.

MAYOR: We are grateful for your outstanding performance. I know I depend on you a lot as well, and I'm really appreciative for all that you do. And especially when you get things together in the drop of a hat and make rooms look like they had never looked before. I just want to commend you and also give you this token of appreciation, along with this gratuity, to say thank you for all that you do. And I'm certain this is not enough for all that you do. But thank you so very much. Appreciate it. Miss Dawn Strickland, everyone.

MAYOR: At this time. We look to our clerk to call for our CPAs.

SMITH: I'd like to introduce the presentation. Our CPA, Trey Scott, is here with Mauldin and Jenkins, and he has a PowerPoint. And I've the commissioners have a paper copy of the same PowerPoint on their desk.

TREY SCOTT: Again. My name is Trey Scott. I was the partner with Mauldin and Jenkins, who oversaw the audit of the city's 2024 financial statements. And pleased to be here with you all this evening to discuss the results of that audit. So just to kind of give you an idea of why I'm here, going to give you a quick introduction to Mauldin and Jenkins, in case you're unfamiliar with who we are, uh,

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going to go over our auditor's report, your compliance reports, uh, your financial statements, some required communications. A few recommendations and related matters and then answer any questions that you all may have. Really quickly about Malden and Jenkins. We were founded over 100 years ago. We serve over 725 governmental entities throughout the southeast. We do this across 14 offices in six states. And the office that serves you all is our Savannah, Georgia office. We're based in Georgia. So that is that is home to us. But enough about us. I think of particular importance to you all as our audit opinion on your financial statements. I think, as you all know, the financial statements that you have in front of you, that annual financial report are the responsibility of the city's management. It's our responsibility as your auditor to express opinions on that financial information based on our audit. And we do that by following generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards. And I'm pleased to report to you all this evening that we were able to issue the city a clean or what we call an unmodified opinion. And what that basically means is that your financial statements present fairly the financial position and the results of the city's operations in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. And that's what you're looking for, is a clean opinion. It's the highest level of assurance that we can provide to you on those financial statements. Also included in your financial statements are a couple of compliance reports. The first is our Yellow Book report. It's a report on your controls and compliance. It doesn't give you an opinion on those, but if we have any findings, that's where we report those. We did have one finding this year, which is down from a number of findings over the course of the last few years. So certainly, some improvements continue to be made and in that arena. And I'll talk a little bit about that here in just a little bit. The other report is our single audit report. So anytime you spend more than \$750,000 in federal grant monies, you're required to have a single audit of those major grant programs. And we did perform that single audit. We had no findings as it related to that. And we also issued you a clean opinion on compliance with those major programs. So that's certainly a very positive thing. Moving on from the reports, talk a little bit about the numbers themselves as a local government. Most local governments present two sets of financial statements. So, within your financial report you have two sets. One is the government wide statements. It takes a look at all of your funds, rolls them up into one column, gives you that big picture view of the city as of June 30th, 2024. And the other are your fund level financial statements. So, your general fund, your public utilities funds, all your individual funds. And so, what we're looking at on this slide here is kind of a snapshot over the course of the last five years of the balance sheet activity of all of your funds rolled up into kind of one number. And so, what I see here is nothing really of concern. You've got a really healthy, uh, number as far as your assets are concerned, fairly low liabilities. Uh, and a good healthy looking net position. And again, that's looking at everything kind of big picture. Government wide, right? You only see these numbers once a year in your audited financial statements. But what you probably see a little. Well, let me before I get ahead of myself, one of the more common questions I'm asked is how healthy are we as a city? And an audit is not designed to tell you how healthy you are, but there are certain metrics that you can look at to gauge that health. And one of those that I like to look at is, is the city reinvesting in itself. Can we look at the capital asset activity and see that? And that's kind of what we see in this graph. We can see continue to see growth in that blue bar which is your depreciable asset base. And accumulated depreciation is going to follow suit. But the closer that green bar gets to the height of that blue bar shows just how aged the assets are. And so that's a pretty healthy mix of old and new. So that that gives me some comfort as it relates to your capital asset activity. So, if we move on from your government wide numbers to your fund level information, what you're more apt to see and, you know, during the budget process and those kinds of things, we take a look at the general fund. Just to point out a couple of numbers here. Your fund balance 3.8 million as of fiscal year end. Now that's not the cash you have available to spend. It's just the difference between your assets and your liabilities. And also, that's a typo there. That unassigned should also be 3.8 million. You can't have more unassigned than your actual total fund balance. So, my apologies there. But if we go all the way down to about that third bullet from the bottom, we did decrease our fund balance this year, about 1.6 million. So ultimately revenues exceeded your expenditures causing that decrease. We were talking about health a little while ago. These bottom two bullet points are two indicators of health as well. How many months of expenditures do you have in fund balance? You all were around three months on June 30th, 2024. And goal the Government Finance Officers Association. They recommend you have somewhere between 3 and 6. So your kind of right there on that on that cusp. We probably don't want

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to dip any lower. So that's one of those numbers I'd probably try to keep in mind. Keep an eye on as we move forward. The other one that I like to look at is your liquidity ratio. So, you could have a really healthy-looking fund balance, but have problems meeting payroll or making payments on your invoices. Uh, and that really wasn't the case as of June 30th, 2024, for you all, uh, your liquid assets could have paid your current liabilities. So, your invoices that were due or your payroll that's coming due, you could have done that a little over four times. So that's a good a good liquid position for the city as far as the general fund is concerned. And here's kind of looking at things for the general fund graphically. Again, you kind of see good ratable increases in your revenue. That's the blue column. Uh, that decrease in fund balance that I mentioned. You can kind of see the gray and the gold bar or yellow bar, uh, decreasing from 23 to 24. Again, that's just one of those things. Certainly, want to keep an eye on. That's not something that we want to see, uh, trending downwards. It's something we want to see trending pretty much flat or maybe increasing slightly. So, uh, again, just something to keep, keep our, our, uh, our eyes on them. The other significant fund that I chose to include as the public utilities fund. So, it's a business type fund and numbers look pretty good there. Your revenue, your operating revenue and expenses kind of fluctuating around the same amount over the course of the last five years, did have a little bit of a dip in cash flows this year, but I expect that probably to bounce back in fiscal year 25. But again, no real concern as it relates to your public utilities fund. Moving on from the numbers, uh, just some things that government auditing standards require me to communicate to you. Again, I mentioned the clean opinion earlier. That's what you're looking for. We did have the one finding, and we also had three recommendations for improvement or management letter comments. And I'll speak on those I think on the next slide. Uh, but uh, moving on, your financial statement disclosure. So, the footnotes in your financial statements, those, uh, and your accounting policies and your accounting estimates, all of those are the responsibility of management and are very integral parts of your financial statements. Uh, we also had no difficulties in dealing with management in the performance of our audit. Uh, no disagreements with management. We work primarily with, uh, with the finance director, Greg there, and his team, uh, a very professional group of people. Get us what we need when we need it. And that's certainly very refreshing from our standpoint. Uh, as your auditor, uh, I think it's also important to note, too, that that we got the audit out on time this year. It's the first time since I've been involved. We've met the state deadline. So that's certainly a very positive thing to be able to present to you all today as well. Uh, additionally, we had no uncorrected misstatements. So, all adjustments were posted to the accounts of the city. And then finally, we're independent of the city in accordance with all of the applicable standards of our profession. And so, these recommendations for improvement that I've mentioned, uh, these are none of these are new. These are all, uh, I guess I've been presenting to you for the last few years. Um, like I did mention earlier, the one finding is this year in closed process. And I know that that Greg's working on that. And we've been working with him. Uh, and our hope is to not be able or to not have to present this finding to you next year. I think he's getting good staff folks to work with him in the finance department, kind of building up that that, that group. Uh, and so our hope is that, yeah, we don't we don't have that finding next year, but ultimately, it's the result of just a number of adjustments being required to get things to where they need to be. Uh, as of June 30th, 2024, the other three, again, are recommendations for improvement. You won't see those in your financial statements. Uh, but these are three that that again, I think Greg's been working on as well. And we've been working with them to interfund balances. These are just balances that are due between the funds. That should be kind of due and payable within a year. And sometimes those things are kind of accumulating over the course of years. And we just want to take a look at those and kind of get those cleaned up, uh, and addressed. Uh, the second there, the Internal Service fund deficits. Internal service funds are designed to serve the city itself. Uh, and I think over time, we haven't properly allocated the costs to the appropriate funds. It kind of goes in line with the inner fund balances as well. And we just want to see those deficits get cleaned up in those funds as well. And then the final one is just a detail listing for your business type capital assets. There's something there. But I think it just needs to be tightened up and cleaned up. That's what these recommendations for improvement mostly are, are just kind of let's get some of these things cleaned up and tightened up. Um, and like I said, I know through my conversations with the finance department, they're certainly working on these in order to get these cleaned up, uh, going forward. I guess this is the next the last thing I wanted to mention, we do have a number of new standards that are going to be effective over the course of the next couple of years, and

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we'll certainly work with the finance department on the best course of, of action for implementation of those. And that concludes what I wanted to report to you all this evening. It's always been a pleasure to serve the city of Waycross, and we look forward to serving you all in the future. And if I can answer any questions, I'd be happy to do so.

MAYOR: Thank you so much for your presentation. And at this time, I'm going to open the floor for any questions that the commission may have. And I'll start with district one. Did you have any questions of our presenter? No, sir. Okay. District two. No, sir. District three.

FELDER: Yes, ma'am. I have a couple of questions.

MAYOR: Commissioner Felder.

FELDER: Yes, my first question is, and I don't know if you can recall because you all did our audit, I believe, the previous year. So how does our current audit findings differ from last year based upon those recommendations that you.

SCOTT: I think we had two findings last year, and I and I would have to look back to see what that other one was because I can't I'm not certain what it was. Uh, but the financial statement closed. The one that is there and active for this year, we've had for several years. Uh, so I guess the easiest way to answer that is we have one less than we had last year. We only have the one finding this year.

FELDER: And are there any concerns about how the administrators and the finance department control the key schemes of our financial process?

SCOTT: If we found anything that we needed to report to you all like those three management letter comments, we would have reported it to you. So, the answer a simple answer would be no, ma'am. Thank you.

MAYOR: And district five. Do you have any questions of Mr. Scott?

NELSON: No, sir. Then I'm glad that we have a clean opinion. And that's basically all we want to look for. That's it. Thank you. Good job. Thank you.

SCOTT: Finance department. Not me.

NELSON: Good job, Mr. Smith. Sir. Good job. Thank you, sir.

MAYOR: We appreciate your report. At this time, we look to our city manager for his report.

CITY MANAGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I do have a comment on the audit findings. A few, few comments, Mr. Mayor. So, one thing that they did recommend and you're going to see this in this year's budget. You're going to increase the budget for training and traveling for the finance department a little bit, uh, to make sure that, um, of course, the finance director is going to be gone. But I also want to, uh, push the other, um, personnel in there to go a little bit further because the finance requirements change so quickly. Uh, throughout the year, um, it's almost impossible to catch up. So, I did, um, get that recommendation. So, we will be increasing our budget. I'm not sure how much right now. Um, but that will be a significant change once we go through the budget process. Um, he did mention about getting the audit on time. Um, I just want to recognize the finance department. Definitely all the departments. Um, we did approve the budget late. Um, but the finance department, they dug deep, uh, along with the rest of the directors and got this audit done on time. Um, so, um, like, as you just mentioned, that was our first time, uh, last year, we met the date, too. We didn't. I think it was a day over, uh, this year we made it on time. So that's just a big accomplishment, uh, by the finance department. And just for clarification, for those that might be looking right now, um, we have had many,

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uh, financial issues over the years with the finance department for many years now. Uh, with Greg. Greg's his team, their kudos, because they have really been cleaning this up. Um, now, once we get the new software packages, um, we'll clean that account that they mentioned about utilities, uh, to make sure we're getting the exact revenue from that account right now. It is kind of questionable because, um, our software is not up to date, and then we do have the meter issue. So those are the things that I did discuss with him and Greg. So, um, I feel like, uh, this next year, definitely the next two years, we should be a, a total turnaround of the financial report, probably dating back five years ago when we when we constantly missed the audit. So, I'm just happy and excited about that because it's been a lot of work put into that. And once again, just want to give kudos out to, um, Mr. Smith and his finance department, I guess, uh, they can hear me right now. So, uh, they got a great team down there. Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: And we commend them.

CITY MANAGER: And I have no significant report, Mr. Mayor. Like I said, I'm still revising the. We're going to move away from that 30-day report, like I said, because y'all get a daily update. Um, we're going to add a few more things to it. We're just trying to figure out how that looks. And, um, once that's done, mainly the court appearances. So, I'm still trying to figure out how to do that without embarrassing any citizens who might be on that court. Um, court list. And that's all I have at this time, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Okay, let me ask another question regarding the course that's being offered here. Municipal government 101. Could you just say something regarding it?

CITY MANAGER: Yes, Mr. Mayor, we had we had some cancellations. Um, but the group that came up, I think we had maybe 15 people, which is good for the first time. Um, last night was just the introduction and then the charter and a little bit of homework. Um, it was all conversation based, so it wasn't like we were reading slides. Y'all saw the slides? We only had 15 slides. Uh, got a lot of good feedback. Uh, last night, they were charged to go review the charter and find one thing in the charter they would like to change or update or delete and then come back and explain tonight. Uh, once they do that, we'll pair off and go into the budget process. Um, and to those listening now, you're not going to come to this class and become an expert on city management. Just impossible. Uh, yeah. But you will come and get a good overview of some of our significant challenges. Um, some of your significant challenges as a commission. I did discuss with them, uh, about the, the, the grace of previous commissions, um, trying to, you know, run the city. And as he mentioned here with some of the limited funds, uh, over the years. And it can be difficult and why it's important that everybody understands how this really works. Um, and I know you might want something if you don't have the ability to, to fund it. It's still a won't. But, uh, so we got some good feedback. We're going to put out a survey, um, after the course is complete and, um, get some more feedback and then we're going to probably modify it then. I think the commission has a panel. You'll be on the panel, I think, Friday night. Uh, Mr. Mayor, your team yourself. We did reach out to some of the state reps to come. I think maybe two of them have committed to coming. Uh, that was a question asked as well about how do the state reps, uh, support the city? We had a long discussion on that. Uh, I did explain to them, uh, during the storms, they, they, um, they called every day. I know they called you every day. And you were working on issues to get us supplies here. Um, not the only job, but this is one examples of you might not see them necessarily doing stuff. Um, you know, passing bills, but they do reach back here and try to help out the community. Definitely in times of needs. Um, like our previous storms. So, all in all, it's been a great course. Um, like I said, we have been watching other courses for like a year now, and we tried to do something different and not just read slides and, um, and like you said, when you come, uh, they'll have a, a few, a few generated questions already that I'll give you for your open. We'll give you for your opening statements, but then there'll be some organic questions after the fact. And I apologize, Mr. Mayor, for any questions on that.

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MAYOR: I'll open the commission or open the floor for the commission to respond to that, and then I'll make my comments. District one. Did you have anything you want to say regarding municipal government? One on one. No, sir. Okay. District two.

BENNETT: Um, just I think it's a great idea. And to have the community to be able to have knowledge or some knowledge of what we do. So, I think it's an excellent idea.

MAYOR: Thank you. District three, NO/ and district five. No, sir. Okay. One of the concerns I had, and I don't know if we'll be getting into it, but one of those issues is parliamentary procedures, and I'm not sure if we're going to get into that, but a good bit of the code is going to be required. That is going to be necessary. And I know those of you who know me, you're going to find out that because most of the organizations that have ever been a part of have parliamentary procedures, Robert's Rules of Order are oftentimes implied or imposed on the group, but it has to be accepted by the group itself. And then there are variations on how it can be implemented in different groups. So, it all depends upon the group itself. So, it takes on its own personality in a sense. But I'll make some reference to that. And then I'm going to ask a question of our city attorney. Once I get to my part of the report. And that's going to be something in relationship to what just took place a few moments ago. For clarity, for the persons who are listening by television.

CITY MANAGER: A great point, Mr. Mayor. And just for reference, we did so all of our slide presentations and general feedback is coming out of the GMA Handbook. Um, once again, just to share a recommendation on how you should do things. There are laws, state and federal laws that we must abide to. So, it's not something we just created out of thin air. Um, I think that what's the perception for some of our citizens even last night? Um, some of them didn't know we had a charter. Um, so, um, like I say, discovery learning. They all know now. Um, so, um, I'm looking forward to the next iteration because like I said, we'll make this better each time. Um, I'm thinking we can do it maybe four times a year. Um, and it should get to the point where it can be, um, taught by anybody. That's the goal. Um, versus just the city manager and some of the other directors. So that's, that's the goal down the road.

MAYOR: Very good. And thank You. So that leads to my report. And my report is going to talk a little bit about some of the events and activities that are going on in the city of Waycross. And most of the events that go on are on our website. So, you have an opportunity to go to Waycross Georgia.gov, and you can see the events that are taking place in the community. But of those I want to highlight, one of which happens to be the 2025 Spring Career Expo, and that will be held at our Waycross City Auditorium or CC McRae City Auditorium. It will be sponsored by Waycross City and also Work source, Georgia. This will have at least 40 plus vendors, and the date for this again is Thursday, April the 3rd, 2025. The time frame is from 10 a.m. in the morning to 2 p.m. in the afternoon. And again, this is CC McRae City Auditorium, 865 Pendleton Street, Waycross, Georgia. Coming up next week, we have Valentine's Day on the 14th, but just the day before it, we're presenting to the city. Love your city. And this is going to be our mayor's Ball. Our speaker for our mayor's ball this year will be the chief executive officer and chairman of our Georgia municipal Association, who happens to be Mr. Larry Hansen. And he will come speaking to us with the theme in mind and the colors for that night will be red, black and white. So those who are interested in coming, please feel free. There are some fliers in the hall. Those who would like to get those. And then if you look on our website, you'll also see the entry fee and all the other intricate parts of it. And you can also scan this with the QR code and take care of it that way as well. Uh, with that being said, we also have district three is going to have a town hall meeting and it's scheduled for Monday, February the 10th, 2025 at 6 p.m., and it will be held at the Okefenokee Lions Club at 711 Columbus Street here in Waycross. And this will feature our district three Commissioner, Missus Katrina Felder. And our guest speaker will be Ethan Jackson Investment LLC and True North Way LLC. And this introduces and discusses that there are new apartments coming. with. Having said that, I want to go back to something that we had a conversation about. Generally, when we have meetings of this sort. Whatever the agenda is, those items will have been discussed in the work session, and they will have been approved by at least three commissioners before it comes to our agenda. So even if an individual wants to bring something, that night of it will still have

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to be approved before we actually bring it to our commission. So, I wanted to make sure that we understand that we enjoy community engagement. We want community engagement, but there are certain steps and processes that actually make sure that the move is smooth. And so, we want to make sure that you understand that there's no one being told you can't talk. It's just saying that if there is something to be done and you've told us that you're going to be utilizing that moment to talk about an event that's on the agenda. You can only talk about what's on the agenda. You cannot create an agenda item for the commission. And the reason you cannot do that is part of our charter, which is one of those discussions that our city manager just made us aware of in just a few moments ago. So, I'm looking now to our city attorney, and I wanted him to kind of speak as to why I asked him the question. The question was, can that be done knowing that it cannot, but just wanted to make sure that you can hear it. And if the commission felt that something I'm doing is not correct, which of course I've noticed multiple times when something is said after the meeting, you should say it. During the meeting, you should always say, point of order, Mr. Mayor. And then you state what the point of order is. You can't just say point of order and begin to talk. And then at the end of your conversation, I will determine with debate sometimes what is well spoken or not well spoken. Okay, so those who do not know that it can be a problem for you, and especially if you have not practiced this in some time. Okay. And especially for this particular commission, you may have done it for another organization, but it does not. It does not pan well until you know how we actually do it. So, I'm looking to the attorney to speak toward that end.

CITY ATTORNEY: Mr. Mayor and commissioners, every organization has to have order and decorum in terms of how you conduct your business. And the City of Waycross Charter does provide for public remarks on official actions that the Commission is expected to take, and those actions are listed on the agenda. And as the mayor indicated, you had a work session and you had certain items moved to the agenda and the agenda is set and you can't talk about everything from A to Z that's not on the agenda, because that is not the appropriate way to handle your business. And it could be very time consuming to do that, to do that as well. Uh, the other issue is the Open Meetings Act. The Open Meetings Act requires an agency such as the City Commission, County Commission, Board of Education Development Authority to publish your agenda. And that agenda should include all items that the agency will discuss for the benefit of the public, so that the public knows what those items are. And unless there is some exigent or emergency where you need to add an item to an agenda or even take an item off the agenda, the agenda that has been set before the meeting is the agenda that you will discuss. Um, you know, you will not add to it and take away otherwise. And so, unfortunately, the gentleman who came before us tonight indicated that he was going to speak on one issue, and he started speaking on another issue, and he even said, I want to speak on an issue that's not on the agenda. He said that or he wanted to speak on an issue that a resolution that he thought should be on the agenda. But it wasn't. So, I mean, that was an indication that even he knew that that item was not up for discussion tonight. So, um, again, everything has to be done in order. Every organization has rules. The city of Waycross has rules, and we have to follow those rules.

MAYOR: Very good. Thank you so much. Mr. City attorney, I just wanted to make sure that those who are watching and you're listening, you're aware of what's going on. Generally, I don't go behind someone and make any kind of statements unless I find that it's a teaching moment, and it's just one of those moments that needs to be clarified before it moves into other spaces. But in that case, we know that it will do whatever it does. But I just want to make sure that I clarify. Those who want to hear and know. You'll know why the decision was made not to hear out the concern of the citizen in that regard, because it's not a public remark on official action. It was a community engagement statement that could have been given during a guest moment in a work session, but not necessarily in the official meeting. So, at this time, we move to our consideration of our official calendar. And I look to our city clerk for that purpose.

SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. There is no approval of minutes. There is no ordinance. Second readings. There are no privileged license renewals. There is privileged license. Mr. Mayor. Should I go ahead and read that?

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MAYOR: Yes. You may.

SMITH: Thank you. Uh, first is Los Compadres Mexican tango. Tango area LLC with J. Gonzalo Gonzalez. 602 Pendleton Street, Waycross, Georgia. 31 501. Beer and wine consumption on premises only. Back to you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

MAYOR: So, with that one being read, we've heard the consent calendar as read by our city's clerk. Commission. What is your pleasure?

BENNETT: Move for approval Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: We have a motion for approval by our Commissioner Bennett. Is there a second?

NELSON: Second.

MAYOR: We have a second by our commissioner, Nelson. All in favor? Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries. The official calendar is. Or the consideration is approved. At this time, we move to our ordinances.

NELSON: Mr. mayor He didn't read the second item for privileged license.

MAYOR: And we've already approved. But is there is there a statement that needs to be made here for us to understand why that was not read? So, at this point, we'll allow for him to read and then we'll get another motion of amendment correct.

SMITH: Second is Topsy's incorporated S Patel 1269 B Ossie Davis Parkway, Waycross, Georgia 31501. Beer, wine, and liquor package sales only. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: We have Heard The consent calendar read by our city clerk. Commissioner, what is your pleasure? And because you made the motion. move Approval on the amendment. Okay. There's an amendment made to our motion. Is there a second? Yeah. Same person has to do the same thing. Yes. So, we have a motion and a second. All in favor? Aye, aye. All opposed? No motion carries. The consent calendar is approved with the motion change. Okay. Now we go to our ordinances.

SMITH: Okay. All right. The ordinance. We have one ordinance. An ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance of the city of Waycross, Georgia. And the zoning map to rezone the property described herein, located at Brunel Street, at Howell Street and Haines Avenue. Parcel A1203035 from C2 highway commercial to R 50 residential to set an effective date to declare an emergency. Second reading. To repeal conflicting ordinances and for other purposes. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Commissioner, you've heard the ordinance read by our city clerk. What is your pleasure? Is there a motion?

FELDER: Move for approval.

MAYOR: We have a motion for approval from our commissioner. Is there a second?

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ROBERTS: I'll second.

MAYOR: We have a second from our Commissioner Roberts. Any discussion on this ordinance?

MAYOR: Commissioner Nelson.

NELSON: Has anyone voiced any concerns or approvals for this that we know of? Because I want to make sure that they're aware of what's going on in that community.

MAYOR: An ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance.

NELSON: Yes.

CITY ATTORNEY: Mr. Mayor, may I?

MAYOR: Yes, you may.

CITY ATTORNEY: Inform the commission. This, uh, this there was a public hearing On December the 17th, uh, to, uh, change, uh, the, uh, to amend the zoning ordinance, but unfortunately, uh, we have not had an opportunity to bring this before the commission. We had the Christmas holidays. And, uh, there were some other administrative matters that we were taking care of. Uh, and the person now, um, has not been able to move forward with, um, developing a property as a residential property. And so, we put it back on the agenda so that it could be read twice tonight. And, uh, the acting clerk here really needed to read the explanation behind that. And I'm going to have him read that as well.

SMITH: Okay. Thank you. By adopting this ordinance, the city commission will rezone Brunell Street at Howell Street and Haines Avenue from C2 highway commercial to R 50 residential to allow for residential development. This follows a public hearing held on December 17th, 2024, when the rezoning request was approved by the City Commission. The City Commission will also declare an emergency so the ordinance can be read twice at the same meeting and passed due to delays caused by the holidays and recent weather events. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: All the clarity that we needed was there. Thank you so very much. With that being said, we have a motion and a second. Commissioner, are you satisfied with that?

NELSON: Yes, I am.

MAYOR: Okay, we'll get ready to move. And voting. I'm going to do a voice vote by district. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. District three. Yes. And district five. Yes, sir. This ordinance in the first reading is approved. At this time, we hear our second reading of the same ordinance and the notation.

SMITH: And an ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance of the city of Waycross, Georgia. And the zoning map to rezone the property described herein, located at Brunel Street, at Howell Street and Haines Avenue, parcel A1203035 from C2 highway commercial to R 50. Residential. To set an effective date. To declare an emergency. To repeal conflicting ordinances and for other purposes. By adopting this ordinance, the City Commission will rezone Brunel Street at Hale Street and Haines Avenue from C-2 highway commercial to R 50 residential to allow for residential development. This follows a public hearing held on December 17th, 2024, when the rezoning request was approved by the City Commission. The City Commission will also declare an emergency so that the ordinance can be read

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twice at the same meeting and passed due to due to delays caused by the holidays and recent weather conditions. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Commissioner, we have heard the reading of the ordinance for its second reading. At this time, we entertain a motion to receive or deny. Is there a motion?

FELDER: I make a motion that we receive the second reading.

MAYOR: We have a motion for the second reading. It is approved. And second, we have a second. Is theocrat?

NELSON: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: From Commissioner Nelson. So let the record show that Commissioner Felder gave the motion and the second was given by Commissioner Nelson. Any questions or comments regarding this ordinance?

FELDER: I have a comment, mayor.

MAYOR: Yes, ma'am.

FELDER: Um, I would like to say thank you to this developer who's bringing housing to our community, which is desperately needed. Um, I also like to thank this developer for going through the proper process when it came to developing this property. Back to you, mayor.

MAYOR: Okay. We have A statement. So now we're getting ready to move into voting. We'll go back to the voice vote starting with district one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. District three. Yes. And district five. Yes, sir. Motion carries. This ordinance is approved. At this time, we look to our city's clerk with our resolutions.

SMITH: A resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, accepting and approving the annual Financial and Audit report for fiscal year ending June 30th, 2024, and for other purposes. By adopting this resolution, the City Commission will approve the Annual Audit Report for Fiscal year 2024, completed by the accounting firm of Malton and Jenkins LLC of Savannah, Georgia, and direct that the city's Finance Department accept and implement any needed or useful recommendations made in said report for managing the city's financial affairs and transactions. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Commissioner, you've heard the resolution read regarding the city's accepting the financial audit from Malton and Malton and Jenkins. Uh, we just need a motion and a second. Is there a motion for approval? We have a motion from Commissioner Nelson. Is there a second? Second. We have a second from Commissioner Bennett. Any discussion regarding this resolution? Hearing none. We'll move into voting. All in favor? Aye. Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries. This resolution passes. Mr. clerk.

SMITH: A resolution of the city of Waycross, Georgia, to approve services agreement between the Waycross Area Shelter for Abused Persons Incorporated, doing business as Magnolia House and the City of Waycross, Georgia, to assign a police officer to serve as a full-time sergeant investigator stationed at the Waycross Family Justice Center and for other purposes. By adopting this resolution, the City Commission will approve the Services Agreement with the Waycross Area Shelter for Abused Persons Incorporated, doing business as Magnolia House, to provide a full-time police officer serving

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as a sergeant to address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and or stalking in connection in conjunction with a Ware County Sheriff's detective, towards fostering a streamlined method of support to victims and their families to be paid for through grant funding obtained by the Magnolia House. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

Thank you, Mr. Clark. Commissioner, you've heard the resolution read by our city clerk at this time. What is your pleasure?

BENNETT: Move for approval.

MAYOR: We have a motion for approval by our Commissioner Bennett. Is there a second?

ROBERTS: Second.

MAYOR: We have a second by Commissioner Roberts. Any discussion on this resolution?

FELDER: Yes, mayor, I have a question.

MAYOR: There's a question from Commissioner Felder.

FELDER: Um. Thank you. Mayor. Um, Director Smith, you mentioned that a full-time sergeant investigator will be stationed at the Family Justice Center, and that if I heard you correctly, that grant funding will pay for the salary of this individual?

GREG SMITH: Yes.

FELDER: What is the length of that grant? Funding?

GREG SMITH: The length of time for the contract? Yes. To pay for this. Start this full time, Sergeant.

CITY MANAGER: It's yearly. It's yearly grant. It pays every year. It's the. It's the reimbursement. Yeah, it's the reimbursement that Chief Cox talked about yesterday. That process. It's the reimbursement for that grant. So, they have a grant and they reimbursed us for the officer over there. And it goes every year, year to year. Year to.

FELDER: But there have been so many changes with um, with uh, that have come up about federal grants and more recently. That's why I asked the question.

CITY MANAGER: Understood. Yeah. I think they turn off the grants back on as of right now. So, we should be good.

MAYOR: We have a motion and a second on this resolution. We're moving to voting, and since we had some discussion, We'll move by voice vote. One district at a time. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. District three. Yes. And district. Five. Yes, sir. Motion carries. Resolution passes. At this time, we'll move from this point to our last call. And Mayor Pro Tem, if you don't mind, I'm going to let you go. You want to go last, or you want to go first? I will give you a choice.

BENNETT: I just want to thank everybody. For coming out and be safe. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Oh, and congratulations to Don Strickland. Thank you for a job well done. And Mr. Greg and your staff. Thank you. Thank you. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

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MAYOR: Thank you. Commissioner. At this time, we go to district one.

ROBERTS: I'd like to say thank you. Thank everyone for coming. Be safe and have a good night.

MAYOR: And thank you in district three.

FELDER: I thank everyone for their time. I appreciate you for always coming out and to share your thoughts and your considerations for us as a commission and your concerns for us as a city. you are great. We appreciate it. Thank you, mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, thank you. And district five.

NELSON: Yes, sir. Thank you all for coming out as well. Um, I'd like to recognize Kevin Balsam, my federal, my fellow Am Vets member, second vice chair of that committee. Thank you. Very good.

MAYOR: And to each of you, thank you so very much. I want to commend our finance department as well as Miss Dorn, uh, for her hard work and efforts and just everyone that's present. Thank you, Commission, for being fully here today. And as we mourn the loss of our commissioner, Diane Hopkins, we also say thank you, to the Hopkins family, for lending us her while she was here. We also want to look to our city finance director and say thank you for staring tonight. I know it's a difficult task sometimes. We don't know how it feels to be in that chair until you're starting to read those names for privilege licenses. And that can be quite interesting. But with the aid and the assistance of our city attorney kind of helping you along, I know that made it easier than it could have been. To each of you who are here tonight thank you so very much for being present. We look forward to seeing you in the city. You are again reminded of the Mayor's Ball. Love your city and we want to see you here and enjoy yourselves to dance the night away. And with that being said, I entertain a motion for adjournment.

NELSON: So moved, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Second, we have a motion from our Commissioner Nelson. A second from our Commissioner Bennett. All in favor? Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries and this meeting is adjourned. Have a good evening.