



**MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025 – 5:00 PM
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 5:13 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Alvin Nelson, Katrena Felder, Shawn Roberts, and Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett.

A. Invocation: Commissioner Nelson

Invocation led by Commissioner Alvin Nelson

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Was Read by Marquis Nixon, Assistant City Clerk

D. Request Motion to Approve Agenda

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

II. PUBLIC REMARKS ON OFFICIAL ACTIONS

III. EXECUTIVE DUTIES:

A. Employee of the Month

Matthew Elwell, Public Works Director, presented Nathan Guy with the employee of the month.

IV. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

A. City Manager's Report

The city manager presented a slide presentation highlighting the canals and alleys

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

Mr. Mayor gave condolences to the families of Nelson and Martin family for their loss. He also mentioned the grand opening of the WAWA on Memorial Drive.

V. CONSIDERATION OF OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

A. Consent Calendar:

1. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Waycross City Commission Planning & Information Session, Monday June 30, 2025, at 5:00pm.
- b. Waycross City Commission Meeting, Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 5:00 pm.

2. Ordinance Second Readings: n/a

3. Privilege License Renewals: n/a

Motion to approve the consent calendar made by Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett. Seconded by Commissioner Felder. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

B. Privilege Licenses: n/a

C. Bids: n/a

D. Ordinances: n/a

E. Resolutions: n/a

VI. LAST CALL and/or ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Nelson made a motion to go into executive session for personnel, seconded by Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett. The meeting was adjourned to go into executive session at 5:25pm.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:

+ Michael Angelo James
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jacqueline Powell
JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And let's see. Today, as some citizens requested, user slides for the commission meeting as well. Mr. Mayor the vision and mission has not changed. Priorities Have not changed. With the exception that we have added the blighted properties as a standalone priority. Because the commission has made that their next immediate priority to rectify. And for those who have been watching and missed the working session, the summary of these slides are on that working session on video. Again, as discussed yesterday, Mr. Mayor, we're going to highlight two areas an area each week. Other priorities. The first being the canals and alleys. And we talked about it yesterday about some things that the commission has directed me to do with the core engineers who are doing the data collection. We are following some of their recommendations as far as canals and alley maintenance. The new edition was divided properties, and we're going to right now in the infant stages of research and best practices, building that small committee to help us out on the proper inventory and then coming up with creative ideas, to mitigate this problem. As stated yesterday, this is a long-term problem that will require long term solutions. again, we haven't found any other city has practice it yet. We're going to make our best attempt to do so. I've already had some recommendations from some of the citizens and some of our business area. Um, we've tried to apply that information as well as we move forward, uh, trying to shrink the number of properties. As example tonight during the hearings, uh, you did hear other alternatives for these properties, uh, being, uh, new uses. So that was good to hear. Um, I guess real world action that could happen in some of our properties that can be saved. Ten year plan remains the same, Mr. Mayor. And the midterm phase two, four years. Uh, everything is on course and on schedule. We did have, uh, the first IT changeover. we did have a few hiccups, but it did end up being very smooth again. Um, thanks to the great leadership of Mr. Smith and Mr. Simmons and their departments making that transition and talk to our citizens face to face each and every time to explain to them why the process was needed and how it benefits them over time. Mr. mayor moving to the infrastructure update. this has not changed much from yesterday, but I will repeat some things, for any new audience that you have today. Of course, the water and waste treatment plant, uh, wastewater treatment plant is still ongoing. Um, Engineering Department did change out the program manager there and the contractor there. So, we're back on schedule to get that thing, uh, getting that done as far as upgrades and repairs, uh, Sweat Street, it's still ongoing. If they'll make, uh, Quarterman Street. We can't discuss that today about that property owner. That's one of the things he's going to do as well is help us out with that as he builds those houses and help us out with that. Um, so we'll I'm very appreciative of that property owner, uh, assisting the city on making the streets safe for those citizens. Uh, I did omit some dirt roads. And Mrs. Strickland. Dawn Strickland, uh, I believe, uh, she did do additional research. So, we added, uh, additional roads. I think about the 40. I sent out an email today. I want to say it's up to 46 now. I mean, 42 now dirt roads. also, they go back and relook the mandate. there was some confusion on, uh, what the mandate was for that resolution. I'm trying to get further clarity. Uh, it just said that we had to service the road, not necessarily pave the road. So, I think they did mean, uh, milling on some of the roads if That's not the case. I won't try to verify that right now. Uh, also to use, uh, once that is completed with all dirt roads, do to do some initial pavement or those monies left over. Uh, right now you see the estimate of the roads being 2.5 million. Uh, we did put in the budget, 4.5 million, for the roads to get done. So, we should have some, some savings left over once we get all dirt roads completed. And once again, this is just an estimate. It might be less. It might be more, more when we start doing the actual work. we did post the dirt roads, uh, to the website This morning. So, citizens can see, the roads that have been done in the past, the roads that are currently under contract. Uh, the roads there in the next phase and the road will have to be done. It's color coded. Should be simple for us to understand. However, they have any questions, they can reach out to my office or the engineering branch, and we'll go to further detail that for those having questions. Yesterday the paving road striping has been started. Uh, we're still working the canals areas. The parks are, on schedule. Uh, the water leaks here. As I said, uh, we don't put all the leaks here on Daily Report. Right now We have each week we manage about 40 to 50 leaks as they come off report. It changes each day. I update this slide, but the commission did get the new slide. You will see that, uh, I think Israel Street, Knight Street, Spurgeon Street and a few more streets were added. Pineview Street was removed. Folk Street was removed. Highsmith Street was removed. So, as they get the list down, you see new pothole

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streets with potholes on them. And so that, like I said, we're averaging about 40 to 50 a week. So, you're looking at a month time frame that's after 200 potholes/sinkholes that are getting mitigated monthly. So again, uh, much respect to uh, and kudos to Mr. Lake and the public works Director. He's hand in hand with him about getting this done. they do for general knowledge of the population, the public. Um, they do right around in the morning, as I do myself. We check for potholes. This is a daily thing. Um, so sometimes when we get calls in, uh, as you can see, it's being mitigated. Especially when I get phone calls I don't say anything, but we got it. But we've probably already identified that pothole, and it's on this list. So again, I ask citizens to look at the list and use the app. That's going to be your fastest way to get the correct information when dealing with potholes and sinkholes. Uh, and that's it. As far as that part of the city update where I moved into. Um, I said I would give a final update of the GMA summary on courses. What I did was I looked at this before. This is just the classes everyone took for the commission. Administration staff. Um. And then we did the course summaries. Um, what was this course? And again, it's online for citizens. We'll post this on the city manager's page of the website. So, if they want to look this in detail again, just summary to the course that we ought to. And I got this some, some feedback from commissioners and staff and some of this I pulled straight from the website.. I tried to, uh, go back and look at all the summaries and some of the feedback that I received and some of the commissioners and kind of just put forward for action items. Didn't want to try to do too much. We got a lot going on already, but these are the areas that align with our priorities that I think we all benefit from the most as far as moving forward. We learn from each of these classes. We have multiple commission admin staff that went to these courses. Uh, the main one being of course, finance. And the main thing here is the revenue generation or requirements deletion. that's the only way that we can impact, first of all, the budget and then our staff, as far as salaries, I want to make that clear. So, um, using some of that course material, I think I said to the commissioners in that course, um, it was a great course, and we talked about a host of things. but the main thing was really utilizing your taxes, to make your city benefit from your taxes. And the main point of the taxes is it kind of lines with that third coming down there about a communication strategy, making sure everybody understands what the tactics actually fund. And I'll say this again, it is in your budget books. But two thirds of our budget is going to be salaries and benefits. Um, so until that, you know, either we raise more taxes, or we get cut that thing down, we'll always be in that quorum of trying to figure out how to best benefit our workforce. Uh, next would-be building bridges between cities and colleges. And, um, that really is a focus. And we mentioned this before. I think two of the commissioners mentioned, when I first got here about how do we get the college students, um, to go, um, to college to go to college, actually, but don't live here. Um, they live in other areas. And we initially talked about, um, needing more housing units and now that housing is coming. So, it's another great point, um, leading to discussion that we'll be able to have money for those houses, if not just drink, you know, and normally, uh, they should be able to maintain them, you know, you know, we're afraid to go along. Um, but that's part of this as far as the building bridges between the cities and the colleges is to figure out how do we work better to support that from the college. And I do remember conversations with both deans about if the city could figure out a way to provide housing for students. So that's something I think two commissioners have mentioned in the past that, you know, we kind of got sidetracked on because the other priorities. But we'll try to, you know, try to figure this out and move forward. And then, um, there's two of the commissioners. Uh, well, the whole commissioner's body has mentioned this regional development and not necessarily be territorial with city to city, especially our border cities. Um, this comes into place when we talk about, you know, the Blackshear with the water expansion we mentioned a few times before, um, if we provide them services they cannot provide, they in turn will bring other businesses in on our border that our city will be able to thrive from. So that's just an area, one area that, you know, we could look at as far as unionization. And also, when you talk about regional development houses, again, maybe there's some areas in the city that can't put houses and maybe we can, especially the county. But I see we've been talking about the county as well. they have areas they are putting houses up to. So, um, just want to work on that better as far as those bridges and not have them continue to be, you know, not bridges. So, and then public policy development, um, just to improve the communication strategy. we often talk about policy here. through social media, through our meetings and other channels, town halls and things of that nature. the things I do now, um, my only tracking measurement for performance measures is

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going to be Facebook. So, I look at our engagements and when we do certain things and stuff and what is really driving the conversation. Unfortunately, it's always going to be some negative. It's going to get the most views. We have to figure out how to get past that. And anything positive, uh, does not get a huge return. So you got to figure out how to make these positive stories go further because, um, back to the report. You know, ten years prior, these last two years on these seven streets, um, as far as various reasons for that Covid and a few other things. But we are making progress. You know, I think we did over 20 streets so far, the last two years. Once we can do dirt roads done go to the next year, we should be around 30 to 35 streets. So, parks are being done, but we have to figure out what communication strategy, how to get all the positive things the commission is driving to the citizens. Um, so as well as back in line with safety. And we know this hurricane season coming up, we tried our best to explain, um, what potentially can happen again. Last year, this time frame, this is when everything started was still part of July getting hit hard in August, and it came back in September. So, everybody again should be preparing right now as best they can be on resources while the city tries its best. Prepare what they can. Release resources. Uh, again, keep communications. So, we're trying to push code red the city app email distribution and list the those. We get it, but we also send it out to those citizens already subscribed. I think right now we just want to say we have maybe about 2800 citizens. They get email and they give us feedback. 2800 citizens get email. They give us feedback. We definitely need more. Um, so they're going to try to do in the future once we have the complete changeover of the IT systems, we have everybody's email addresses. They're going to do another monthly type of emails. And we should have they can have 6800 customers across the water sewer. Hopefully we'll be able to push all that out as far as mass notification each month. So that's an added plus to the software. So, I want to say the last thing is conflict resolution. Um, again, trying to manage conflict internally and externally, within us and some of our citizens just find a better way to get the shared understanding. Um, because I spoke to, um, some of the day, I think a lot of our citizens, you know, of course, we're dealing with inflation and a lot of things and poor economics. So of course, they're always going to come from a place of scarcity. And we got to understand that. I got to understand that. So, um, you want to be better understand and try to communicate. But again, uh, back to the communication strategy can be hurling insults and all those things and expect the same questions and back, um, in that manner. So that, concludes my report. I just want to make sure that I covered everything here. And I did, we'll make sure that we do this type Presentation for Both meetings. Um, again, like I said, look at the algorithm from Facebook last night. Um, I know this meeting gets less interaction. It does get some interaction. Even though we are just. You're doing the job and then we get both cars. We do have some people that watch this. And I think this will, um, probably boost more views. So, we're going to try this attempt as well. Um, as far as posting it back-to-back nights and I pause for Any questions?

MAYOR: Commissioners, do you have any questions of our City Manager? Thank You. For the mayor's report, I do want to tell you that there's going to be some homegoing services this weekend for three young people who passed away as a result of an event that took place on last week, July 10th. And those services will take place on this Friday and this coming Saturday. So, we do encourage families both Nelson and Martin families. And alongside that, we do want to make mention that on the 17th at 830, there will be a grand opening for the new Wawa that will be located on Memorial drive please feel free to come. The time will be at 830 and there will be a presentation on another faith. And that's what I have at this time. We look to our Clerk for our consent calendar.

ASST CITY CLERK: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Consent calendar. Today we only have approval of minutes. We have our Waycross City Commission Planning and Information session Monday, June 30th, 2025, at 5 p.m. Also, the Waycross City Commission Meeting for Tuesday, July 1st, 2025, at 5 p.m. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, Mr. Nixon. Commissioner, you have heard the presentation of our consent calendar presented by our city clerk. What is your pleasure?

COMMISSIONER BENNETT: Move for approval.

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COMMISSIONER FELDER: Second.

MAYOR: I have a motion for approval by our mayor Pro tem. A second by commissioner Felder. With the voting. All in favor?

ALL: I.

MAYOR: All opposed? No. Motion carries and the consent calendar passes. Is there an executive session?

CITY MANAGER: Yes. Mr. mayor,

MAYOR: At this time, we will entertain a motion for the. Executive session.

COMMISSIONER NELSON: So, Moved.

COMMISSIONER BENETT: Second.

MAYOR: So, motion from Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. All in favor?

ALL: I.

MAYOR: Opposed? Motion carries. And we are now in executive session.