

The City of Williamson

P.O. Box 9

Williamson, Georgia 30292

Steve Fry, Mayor
Stephen Levin, City Council Post 1
Bob Harrison, City Council Post 2

John Smithson, City Council Post 3
Carol Berry, City Council Post 4
Vacant, City Council Post 5

MINUTES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

7 May 2026 7:00 PM

Mayor and all council members in attendance

- I. **CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE, WELCOME.....**Mayor Steve Fry-7:00p
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** (O.C.G A. § 50-14-1 (e) (1))-Motion to amend the agenda to add executive session for personnel and move alcohol license review before the clerk report CB/JS 4-0.
- III. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e) (2))
 - A. Minutes from Meetings held 2 April, and 23 April 2026-Motion to approve the minutes from April 2nd SL/CB 4-0. Motion to approve the minutes from April 23rd CB/SL 4-0.
- IV. **FINANCIAL REPORT**-General Fund: \$1,072,935.26, SPLOST \$397,659.22, Water Fund \$255,891.15. BH inquired about festival numbers. Mayor reported all expenses and revenues are not final yet, but the festival made money. Mayor noted that property taxes constitute 26% of the city's budget and 40% of that is used to pay for street lights. Despite there being no request, GA Power installed new street lights on Little St. and 2nd Dist. Mayor is researching.
- V. **REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES AND BOARDS**
 - A. New Alcohol License Application Review-Mayor reported requirements were met and advised application is submitted through licensing portal for approval by the city before the state approves. Business operations discussed and BH asked if license is approved what would their hours be, noting city ordinance restrictions for alcohol sales. Applicant, Mark Sanders, advised current hours are Mon-Fri 6a-2p and Sat 7a-2p with plans to gradually increase to 6p. BH stated ordinance 7-4-14 says a false application is cause for denial and referred to the question in which Sanders marked yes to previous sales at that location. Sanders said he answered based on information provided to him. City has no record of sales or licenses issued at that location. BH asked about distance to the church. Motion to allow amendment of application to update question regarding previous sales at location CB/JS 3-1 with BH against. Motion to approve the amended application CB/JS 3-1 with BH against. BH asked to talk about how close it is to the church and Mayor noted it isn't a factor for malt or wine. Clerk advised OCGA 3-3-21 states sales of malt/wine must be 100 yards from schools while sales of distilled spirits must be 100 yards from churches and 200 yards from schools and neither may be sold within 100 yards of a rehab facility. BH asked Richard Wallace with the Methodist Church to speak. Wallace believes church would be opposed.
 - B. City Clerk Report-July 4th falls on Saturday and asked if city planned to observe the holiday on July 3rd. Noted the council meeting is scheduled for July 2nd. Motion to close city operations on July 3rd in observance of the holiday CB/JS 4-0. No change to meeting date. HWR has replaced all city-side only GRR service lines. Requested that the council consider authorizing the attorney to create a liability waiver allowing HWR to replace customer side lines. Noted the work would be done under HWR's current contract at no additional cost to the city or to the customer. Motion to create a liability clause for homeowners to sign allowing HWR to replace their service lines under the city's contract CB/JS 4-0.

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- C. Council Member Reports-**JS**-Pavilion and caboose need cleaning, but caboose needs repairs and possibly repainting. Motion to get the park pavilion pressure washed JS/SL 4-0. Picnic tables in disrepair and will look into options. Additional mulch needed. Culvert clogged again.
BH-None.
CB-Wisteria Festival was a success and only had one vendor complaint. BH said crowds were down, people weren't spending money like at Concord Jubilee, and there was a lot of dog poop in the grass. JS reported several vendors sold out and overall feedback was positive. JS noted he's at the park daily and hasn't seen any dog mess. Motion to allow public comment CB/JS 4-0. Citizen said Robert Strange would like to add military trucks to where the Huey is for a museum. Sherlock Holmes Dinner Theatre will be Sept 18 and 19. Discussed possible 4th of July celebration with amphitheatre completion. Motion to install cameras with sound at city hall CB/SL 4-0.
SL-Work started on amphitheatre. Pleased with Wisteria Festival.
- D. City Attorney Report-Items on agenda, will discuss at that time.
- E. Mayor's Report-HB2289 limits local authority over telecom permitting in public rights-of-way. City collects franchise fees for installation of poles in its ROW. Griffin water rate to city decreased by 25 cents, but cost to run city's system has increased. PCWSA wants to connect their lines on city ROW at Free Liberty Church to provide water to Coggins St, Stephens St, and Peach State airport. Ice House COI was not received but lease is up to date. Researching digital sign for library to replace old one utilizing a safety grant. Will present cutting down the hump on 362 to GDOT as part of roundabout planning. Commended clerk for getting drought notice on website. Burn ban in effect as of May 1 and burning now requires a permit. New warning siren installed. Arrests made by Spalding PD related to robberies in Roundtree and Ashley Glen.
- F. County Matters-Pike P&Z director moved to Upson and Rob Morton is acting as director.
- G. Library Report-Open 22 days with 150 patrons and \$24 income. Egg hunt was a success with over 50 kids participating. Thanked CB for assisting in hiding 720 eggs. Preparing for Summer Reading which starts at the end of May. Free library at caboose needs to be rebuilt. BH said he plans to convert a glass cooler for use as new free library. Debate over use of glass/DIY. Book inventory is going well. Pike Co Dance Academy donated to the new story book trail.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Memorial Tree Planting Project Updates-CB and clerk meeting with landscape architect from The Country Estate to discuss plans. Clerk researching plaques, benches, and bricks.
- B. Old Fayetteville Road Paving Project Update-Discussed width requirements for a legal two lane. City has prescriptive easements but doesn't have enough ROW to convert Drewry and Old Fayetteville to a two lane. SL asked about fixing the shoulder drop-off and was advised the city can't since it's on private property. Whitley Engineering provided paving options of no widening for \$136K, widening by one foot for \$162K, widening Drewry two feet for \$186,500, and widening by three feet plus adding 3-way stop at Drewry/Old Fayetteville and converting Drewry to one-way for \$195,700. Liability concerns related to narrow roads were addressed and attorney advised installation of "Narrow Road" signs would be appropriate. Ownership of vacant lot at Drewry and Old Fayetteville deliberated. CB noted location would be good for additional parking for the park. Motion to have attorney conduct a title search for property located at the corner of Drewry and Old Fayetteville CB/SL 3-1 with BH against. Attorney advised a survey may be needed. Funding options include LMIG and SPLOST. Motion to go with paving option three that widens Drewry SL/CB. Further discussion to clarify prices are estimates and may change once final specs are presented to bidders. Motion carried 3-0 with BH abstaining. Reason provided is that he has a financial interest due to owning property on Old Fayetteville.

- C. Amphitheater Status Update-McLeRoy moving along with possibility of completion by July 4. Discussed possible 250th celebration. JS inquired about material for stairs being metal vs concrete. Council agreed concrete was the better option. JS suggested adding a ramp, but height may make it too long. Mayor will discuss with contractor. Acceptance letter included language to allow for change orders as needed upon mutual acceptance between city and contractor.
- D. Filling of Board of Ethics Position Vacancy-Motion to appoint Kevin Hurt as GA bar member for the Ethics Board SL/JS 4-0. Discussed asking Mr. Hurt to also serve as the city's municipal court judge so code violations would have a way to be heard. Attorney advised training is required.
- E. Progress on Status of Blighted Properties in the City-Properties constitute an attractive nuisance under city ordinance due to abandoned houses. Liability concerns addressed. One property has self-corrected since the new owner was issued a building permit for demolition and new construction. Letter for Highway 362 property was returned unclaimed and owner may need to be personally served. Attorney confirmed address of property owner, listed as an LLC, utilizing secretary of state website. Owner of Old Fayetteville property responded.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. 2026 Water Rate Schedule Review-Griffin rate decreased, but city system operation costs have increased. Motion to continue FY25 rates for FY26 JS/SL 4-0.
- B. City Social Media Policy Review-Reviewed sample policies. JS asked about legality of not allowing comments on meeting videos, as the videos/comments wouldn't be consistently monitored. Discussed adding disclaimer to the channel notifying videos are for information purposes only and are not monitored. Pike Co Board of Commissioners has comments turned off on their social media. Mayor expressed concern about following meeting laws and said the GMA conference would be a source for answers to these questions.
- C. City Banners and Flag Updates-JS presented his designs for banners and flags. City doesn't have a seal or flag and hasn't been able to participate in the GMA conference's opening ceremony. City has seasonal banners but needs permanent ones. Motion to move public comment before executive session CB/SL 4-0.
- D. ~~New Alcohol License Application Review~~-*Moved prior to clerk report*
- E. **PUBLIC COMMENT: Fred Jones "Feed the Children"**-Not in attendance. Mayor reported Mr. Jones' request to utilize city park for feed the children initiative. Attorney advised to thoroughly research due to potential liability. Hold harmless clause for city and proof of insurance required.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3) *Personnel*-Motion to exit open session and enter executive session CB/JS 4-0 9:01p. Motion to re-enter open session CB/SL 4-0 9:33p. No action taken as result of executive session. BH discussed agenda and alcohol license application.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT: Fred Jones "Feed the Children"-*Moved before executive session*

X. ADJOURNMENT-Motion to adjourn SL/BH 4-0 9:38p

APPROVED

BY: CB/SL 5-0 DATE: 6-4-26

Paula Santag - city clerk
