

MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 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, December 1, 2025, at 5 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Shawn Roberts, Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett, Katrena Felder and Alvin Nelson.

A. Invocation: Commissioner Bennett

Invocation led by Mr. David White

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. City Clerk to Read Section 2-66 (a) and 2-67 (b) – Decorum

II. GUESTS:

Mr. David White, 1419 Marion, Waycross, he spoke on the progress of Corridor Z and Blackwell.

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Discussion Items: *****SEE ATTACHED DISCUSSION NOTES*****

1. Bids: n/a
2. Infrastructure Update
3. FY26 CDBG Area Project Selection
4. Server Replacement

B. Privilege Licenses Renewals: n/a

C. Privilege Licenses: n/a

D. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

E. Proposed Resolutions: n/a

F. City Attorney Report:

G. City Managers Report:

Section 6.00.02 –Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with a disability. The City will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants and employees when necessary to permit them to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

H. Last Call

I. Adjourn to Executive Session

J. Adjournment

Michael Angelo James

MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jacqueline Powell

JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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MAYOR: City Commission Planning and Information session is now called to order. At this time, we look to our City Manager to call for our invocation.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This time, the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance will be led by District two Commissioner Bennett.

BENNETT: Thank you, Mayor. Thank you, City Manager. Pastor White, will you do us the honor?

SPEAKER 1: Father, we thank you, Lord. We thank you for bringing us together. We pray that this be a productive meeting that would be helpful, helpful for everyone. We thank you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

ALL: Amen. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MAYOR: We want to thank our City's Commissioner for calling for our Brother White to give us our invocation and our Pledge of Allegiance. At this time, we look to our City's Clerk for the reading of our decorum.

CITY CLERK: Section two Dash 66 decorum. The mayor, commissioners, staff and persons in attendance shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner except when expressly authorized by the mayor. All remarks, comments and questions shall be directed to the mayor and not to individual commissioners, staff or persons in attendance. A commissioner, staff or person in attendance shall not speak at a meeting until the commissioner, staff or person in attendance has been recognized by the mayor and granted permission to speak or ask a question. All comments, remarks or questions made by commissioners, staff or persons in attendance shall address the item on motion that is being discussed or be pertinent to the resolution, ordinance or agenda item before the commission. No one shall make or use inappropriate, insulting, vulgar, obscene or profane language, or make any offensive remark or comments while speaking. Nor shall anyone accuse any other person of being immoral, violating any law, rule or regulation, or committing any ethical violation. Further, no one shall use this opportunity for public comment to speak about any activity undertaken for political reasons or ends, such as campaigning for votes before an election, campaigning for another person, making speeches, attempting to raise funds, etc. or otherwise promoting oneself or one's private position. Section 267 B persons who wish to address the city commission at work session shall have the right to address or speak to the city commissioners on official actions or other topics relating to the business or interests of the city. The commission will not hear from persons, and persons will not be permitted to speak on matters or issues which are not related to official city business matters, or issues not under the jurisdiction or control of the commission. Matters or issues published on an agenda item as a public hearing agenda item, or on matters or issues which are traditionally reserved for executive session, such as personal matters and matters which are the subject of or pertain to pending or current litigation. Because time is a limited resource and, in an effort, to hear from the public in the most efficient and effective manner possible, a total of four persons will be permitted to speak at each work session, with a maximum of three minutes allotted to each speaker. Speakers shall sign up on a first come, first served basis. Failure to follow the procedures outlined herein may result in an individual not being eligible to address the commission until he or she agrees to the mayor's satisfaction to abide by the rules stated herein. The speaker must begin the remarks by stating his or her name, address, and organization represented, if any. The speaker must initially address all remarks to the mayor and not to any individuals. The speaker shall follow the rules of decorum and as set out in section two, Dash 66, and must avoid repetition and argument. Any commissioner, the city manager or the city attorney may, after receiving permission from the mayor, ask questions of the speaker. The asking of questions by any commissioner, the mayor, city manager, or city attorney shall automatically suspend three minute time

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limit. Persons who have not satisfied the sign up requirements will not be allowed to speak unless there is a consensus of commissioners to allow the person to speak. Back to you, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Just a reminder, as she's read the decorum each time we do a meeting, there may be a variation. In a way, things are done based on the immediate knowledge of a thing. So, as she's reading into these meetings, we're getting to be aware of some of the things that maybe some people who have been in the meetings have not heard before. But we do want you to know that this is in your handout. You should have an agenda tonight. And on the bottom, it tells you when this was created and the time frame, just in case you had questions about it. At this time, we look to our city clerk to call for any guests that we may have tonight.

CITY CLERK: Mr. Mayor, we have one. We have Mr. David White. If you'll step to the podium. Mr. David White is here speaking on roads. Mr. White, if you would state your name and address for the record. And you have three minutes, sir.

SPEAKER 2: My name is David White, Junior. I live 1419 Marion Street. I want to say this we've been fighting for the road quality in Blackwell and Garlington and it seemed like it's by about to happen, you know, when we work together, we can get things done. But you have to work together. Because if we don't work together, we fall. You know, I start this talking about this here for a year, and now we're getting it done. But we have to say, all of you had something to do. All of you. I think the City Manager, none of you gave up on it. That's the main thing. Everybody fought because it was a good fight. And when you do a good fight, you get things done, but you got to do it together. You got to do it together. I thank you for this space. Thank you.

MAYOR: Thank you. At this time. We look to our City Manager for the remainder of our docket for this evening's work session.

CITY MANAGER: Oh, thank you, Mr. Mayor. Before we begin the actual session, I will ask the City Clerk to introduce the new assistant clerk. I don't think anybody's actually met her. Awesome. This would be a good time since she sat down here today to say hello.

CITY CLERK: Yes. Mayor and Commissioners. Margot. Margot McKellar, if you'll stand. Margot is my newest addition. She is the city's new addition too. And she has been doing a great job, and I'm very happy to have her. Welcome.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This time, we have no traveling and training schedule. We're moving to the agenda items. The vision and mission remained the same. The city priorities, big priorities remain the same. Priorities further broken down remain the same. Mr. Mayor as a quick update? We did add some slides to each of these priorities. So, I know we can't go into each detail about each one, each meeting, but those citizens who might be watching, um, this will be on Facebook. And once Facebook takes it down, it will be on our YouTube channel. But it provides a summary of each party in detail. So, there's an example, um, canals and alleys. And each of these priorities will have its own summary. And moving forward, Mr. Mayor, blighted properties. Unhoused citizens. Overpasses and bridges. Streets and roads. Workforce morale. And again, Mr. Mayor, we've discussed all these in detail. Just updating the community that for their records they can find these on these slides moving forward. Data driven analytics. Effective communications. Thank you, Mr. White on that. Retainment ponds. Stormwater. Budgeting. In the newest edition, Mr. Mayor will be affordable housing. And I'll talk briefly on these new slides.

CITY MANAGER: I'll read the definition for those who might not be familiar with the term. It means a household that pays no more than 30% of its income on rent or mortgage, plus utilities. This applies to several areas. Seniors on fixed income working families, individuals with disabilities, young professionals, veterans, and low to moderate income residents. Affordable housing does not mean low quality. It means priced appropriately for the low local wages. Why is affordable housing a challenge?

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We face the same barriers as many small Georgia cities. We have a limited housing inventory based on age. We know construction costs around the country that's growing up. We do have aging homes. Currently we don't have many new subdivisions being built, but it has changed since I created this slide deck. As we know, we have roughly 140 units going into play over the next few months. Of course, we have a high demand for military here in Waycross. A lot of our households live on a fixed income with limited options. And the federal funding has slowed down for certain programs. We hope that it will pick back up in the next year. And as a result of that, many residents struggle to find safe and stable affordable housing inside the city. What we can do as a city and what we're doing as a city, so one way partnering with developers and nonprofit organizations, the CDBG, which we'll talk about later on. Going to that, that will open up, I want to say, in April, this April coming up. We're providing accurate zoning guidance. We changed some of our zoning guidance to attract more investors. Thanks to the bids department and the community improvement department they're streamlining our permitting for development and that's going well. Supporting the land bank and using that more effectively encouraging redevelopment of our older properties. Advocating for more state and federal housing resources, working with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on Regional Housing Strategies. And of course, we want the city to act more as a facilitator and not necessarily the builder. And what city cannot do; we cannot build a private homes. We cannot require private developers to construct affordable units. We cannot control the market or how it rents, ask for rent. We can't force landlords to rent or repair private property. I know this is a big one right now. We continue to get calls on. We're going to do an update on that, how that process works as far as going to court just so our citizens know that we can't use Splost for housing to take ownership of private line without due process and many of the housing challenges fall on the state, federal and private market conditions, not necessarily city control.

CITY MANAGER: Key housing tools and, of course, the land Bank authority. And we discussed that many times and the CDBG housing programs and then the Zoning Planning Board and our partnerships with our nonprofits, churches, investors and regional agencies to encourage new constructions. While new housing matters, of course, it reduces rent pressure, stabilizes neighborhoods, track employees and workforce, reduces blight that's the biggest one. Provides options for seniors and young families. Support growth and long term economic stability. New homes benefit the entire community, not just the buyers. And key takeaways are there, Mr. Mayor, and I'll pause there, Mr. Mayor, for any questions on affordable housing or comments by the commission.

MAYOR: Okay. I'll open the floor to the commission to have comments or questions, and I'll start with District one. No, sir. District two. No, sir. District three. No. And District five. No, sir.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next Mr. Mayor, we'll move on to the city plan. Short term, mid term, long term remains the same. We are currently in the mid term. Everything is going well as far as updating the policies. Complete overhaul of our automated systems and then just getting the business with our workforce. As far as innovation, modernization, infrastructure and of course, divesting from things that don't work and investing into new things that do work. We had no bids tonight, Mr. Mayor, but I think the Purchasing Manager wants to make some comments tonight. Do you still want to make that comment or are you okay? Okay, so we'll accept that, Mr. Mayor. We'll move into the agenda items. Infrastructure update, Mr. Mayor. This is posted today you all should have received an email as well. This also went out over our new text feature for our citizens, not on social media. Everything remains the same as far as what we do on each zone on Monday. Engineering projects remain the same. We started the dirt road paving that's in accordance with the Splost 2023 and some other work that's being done. We had to pull the Lee Avenue request for maintenance. I'm trying to relook at funding scope on that, and we'll put that back on the agenda for next time. The zones, Mr. Mayor. I'm going to repeat this. Just so some of the citizens who have just tuned in for the first time can understand, Zone one is Albany Avenue to Plant Avenue. Zone two is Memorial Highway to Screven Avenue. Zone three is Memorial Highway to Haines Avenue. And then Zone four Albany Avenue to Glenmore Avenue. And again, these are the street paving ongoing and some of our major water and sewer projects.

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CITY MANAGER: Collaboration projects, Mr. Mayor as briefed last time with GDOT, the hybrid beacon at SR520, and Garlington is in design phase. That's almost complete. While I'm stating that we did have one of the beacons get knocked down ran over about three months ago, that should get put back in place this Thursday. So, all the parts finally came in so, we'll put it back up. SR520 from Stephenson to SR/US1 program moved to the concept development phase. This is the raised mediums. Scenic route to SR520 to Havana program moved to the concept development phase. This also has raised mediums and then Business 1 as far as plans we discussed this. This might take some time for us funding, but it is on GDOT's radar. And, of course, we already discussed the overpass. We should start early next year. Mr. Mayor, the next agenda item is the CDBG area project. Got it misspelled there. We'll correct that. I did provide the team last meeting with some areas of focus. Unfortunately, tonight we don't have the engineering department here to discuss these areas but I'll kind of touch on them briefly. Once again, this is what the CDBG funds can be used for, which is housing improvements? That's mainly for citizens not necessarily the city managing that program. Public infrastructure. Water. Sewer. Stormwater upgrades. Community facilities, public services.

CITY MANAGER: This is a map, Mister Mayor, outlining the demographics as far as who qualifies for this particular block grant. And of course, we have a lot of areas that qualify based on income in those areas. So, although the engineering team and Inframark is not here, the one main area they want to focus on is pretty much that block from McDonald Street all the way down to, I think it is McDonald Street, all the way down to Martin Luther King. This is the area where we have the most issues is as far as water, sewer with our residents per numbers. This is a recommendation by the engineering program team and the water and sewer team. You have maps of those areas. As you know we will be getting up to \$1 million for those projects and what I can do we don't have to vote on tonight, Mr. Mayor. I just want to make sure the commissioner wants to. Where we would like to have an area selected by at least the first weekend or the first meeting in February. So, we'll go ahead and get started with the plans. And again, if you look at the maps and per population and per issue with water and sewer, that area has the most issues currently with water and sewer lines for the citizens. And it's two pictures of the same thing actually just showing you the different portions of that area. Mr. Mayor.

CITY MANAGER: And then another area will be down here kind of off of Carswell, that's the second area. So, we have two high areas that we have. And like I said, I sat down with the team and kind of looked at number of customers affected and they thought the McDonald to Martin Luther King area would be the most impacted. That's also the area we have, those two other sinkholes developing from those lines being down as well on Quarterman. So, and that kind of ties into this whole project as far as hopefully saving some money because that is a \$1 million project by itself. And again, Mr. Mayor, these are just two of the areas to look at that. We think as far as the city needs; we have the most impact for that amount of funding money we can get from the block grant. I'll pause there for any questions on that, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: I do think that you may have some questions on these, so I'm going to start with District one, since it's in that district. Part of it. You good with it? Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And it's partly in your district as well? Yes, sir. And District three? It is in your district too as well.

FELDER: Mr. City Manager. Thank you. Mayor. Can you be more specific when you stated areas off of Carswell Avenue? Because, as you know, Carswell divides between two districts. So, what specific areas are you referring to?

CITY MANAGER: Izlar Street, is that the street? I think it's Islar in that area, that location. So is back that way.

MAYOR: Mhm. Yes. And three.

FELDER: Just Izlar Street?

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CITY MANAGER: Islar and back. Yes, and again I did have the team, and Mr. Hawkins is not here. But we did reach out to the Southern Regional Commission that's got the data for us on income status and then got with the engineer department and then Inframark. We kind of went over what we have the most problems right now as far as water and sewer, and those are the areas that we're having the most problems in is, any money we can save. The million dollars will not fix any area alone, but it will add to already high cost of mitigation. So, again, the commission can think about it. I just want to kind of put this at least by February, go ahead and put it out there so we can get started on whatever the commission decides.

FELDER: May I have a follow up question?

MAYOR: Yes, certainly.

FELDER: Regarding water issues, what about Mary Street and Garlington Avenue?

CITY MANAGER: So, across the city there are issues everywhere. So, we tried to get known issues as far as broken lines, lines too small, collapsed lines and those were two areas that kind of came with. I could go across the whole city. We have definite problems everywhere but these two areas they're impacting most residents and currently they cost the most. So that's why they picked those two areas. But there are other areas that do have issues and concerns, we all know we have a failing infrastructure system right now that needs a lot of work. That will take some time, but we won't be able to fix everything. So, we're really trying to pinpoint the location so we can maximize that funding.

FELDER: Have this particular area been assessed?

CITY MANAGER: All the areas have been assessed. Yes.

FELDER: I would like to see the data for this area.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. Will do.

FELDER: Thank you.

MAYOR: And Commissioner five.

NELSON: I'm good.

MAYOR: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: All right. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. All right, Mr. Mayor and the last agenda item is going to be it says bids, but it's just an introduction. The Bids Director, Mr. Simmons, is going to brief this portion about our servicer replacement. Mr. Simmons.

PATRICK: Mayor, Commissioners, you know, you approved the IT contract switching from VC Three to ATC. So, one of the things with VC Three releasing our server from VC three, which was at a rate of \$700 a month, was a five year agreement. Our City Attorney got that taken care of, so we're going to give that back to them at the end of the year. But we need to purchase our own. It will be more cost effective for us just to purchase it outright. The contract is \$700 a month, 60 months, I think like 48,000. So, we purchase it outright for 18 we own it. We get the updates, the warranty. We should get a 5-to-7-year life out of it. So actually, we're going to save a good bit of money by purchasing ourselves. We just need permission to be able to purchase it. It's not a new cost, it's just changing it from a lease to a purchase. Saving money again, and it's something that we have to have. This backs up our historical data and connects all of our internet services together, so we need it.

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MAYOR: Okay. With that question being posed, what we'll do is go to each commissioner for their consent of moving from a lease or rental to a purchase. Okay, so I'll start with District one. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes. Okay. District two. Yes, sir. We have two yeses. District three. Yes, we have three and District five. Yes, sir. We have all four consented. All right.

PATRICK: Thank you.

MAYOR: Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. That concludes the agenda items. I will turn it back over to you.

MAYOR: Do we have an executive session tonight?

CITY MANAGER: We do not, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: So, my apologies. I will turn it over to the City Attorney for their report.

MAYOR: Okay. Very good.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. No problem. No report this time, Mr. Mayor. And my report will remain the same as this brief here. Except tomorrow I will update the infrastructure location in places and times. And that's all I have at this time, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Okay. Very good. Well, we'll look to each commissioner and let them speak to the last call. And that starts with District one.

ROBERTS: Thank everyone for coming. And have a good night. Thank you.

MAYOR: Thank you. District one. District two.

BENNETT: Thank you. Mayor. Welcome to our team. And you brought smiles to Miss Jackie already. So that means you're doing an awesome job. Thank you, Mr. White, for your invocation. And everybody be safe with this weather. And back to you, Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you, Commissioner and District three.

FELDER: Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate everyone for coming out tonight. Also, welcome to the new Assistant City Clerk to the city of Waycross. Back to you, Mayor. Thank you.

MAYOR: And District five. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

NELSON: Welcome again. Thank you all. And have a good night.

MAYOR: Thank you. This has been a great meeting. I want to thank each of you for being present tonight and for the time that we shared. Again, welcome, and we're glad that you're here with us. And so, this is just a tremendous family to be a part of. And you'll probably find out how instrumental you shall be throughout this entire movement that we're doing. And we are grateful to our city's manager for working very diligently to get much of this information out to us tonight, so that we can go over these plans so that we by February, we'll have some decisions made concerning our infrastructure and to our Bids Director, we thank you for bringing in the knowledge to us about the server. We can move

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forward with that. And thankfully, the Commission has agreed in totality. And to each of you tonight, it's just been good to see you here, and we look forward to what may be going on days to come. We do note a quick statement regarding our upcoming potentiality of a parade. The rain and the weather are may change that to the following week rather than December 6th. It looks like we may have to move it to the 13th. So be very mindful to here.

CITY MANAGER: I was going to say, Mr. Mayor, we are going to make that call tomorrow and we're going to contact the vendors. I know some questions about what would happen with the funding, so we're going to sit down with them tomorrow. Very good. And go over that.

MAYOR: We do need to note that. So just like I said, it's potentiality that there may be a change due to the way the weather is looking. And we do want everyone to be safe in the city. And with that thought in mind, I do want to make one quick announcement about a team building game that was given to me. This is going to be held on December the 18th, 2023 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the team building is done by the City of Waycross Human Resources and the game day you're going to eat snacks, play old favorites, and learn a new game, and you learn to build with each other, as was stated earlier by our Brother White. He said that we need to work together, and we see things done well. This is one of those ways to get to work together and all employees are welcome. And if you can laugh together, you can work together. And this again will be held on December the 18th, 2025 from 230 to 430. And looking forward to seeing you. And thank you again, everyone for being present. And I'll entertain a motion for adjournment.

BENNETT: So, moved.

MAYOR: Have a motion from our Commissioner Bennett. Second, we have a second from Commissioner Nelson. All in favor, raise your right hand and we're out. Have a great night. Meeting adjourned.