

MINUTES OF THE WASHINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 13, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

EDWARD B. POPE CONFERENCE CENTER

48B Lexington Avenue, Washington, GA 30673

The mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held the regular monthly meeting on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. Councilmembers present were Anderson, Cullars, Fisher, Gunter, Hill, and Mahoney.

1. City Council Meeting Procedures and Decorum

- **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting began with an invocation led by [Mayor Bruce Bailey], followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Sheriff Powers.

- **Decorum for City Officials**

[Mayor Bruce Bailey] addressed the importance of maintaining decorum during meetings and issued a formal warning to city council members due to previous outbursts.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The December 3, 2024, meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Councilman Gunter and seconded by Councilman Anderson. The motion was approved with a vote of 5 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

The December 9, 2024, meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Councilman Gunter and seconded by Councilman Anderson with some corrections noted. The motion was approved with a vote of 5 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

The December 27, 2024, meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Councilman Cullars and seconded by Councilman Fisher. The motion was approved with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention.

- **Public Hearing Procedures**

There was a discussion about the necessity of council attendance at public hearings, and differing opinions were expressed on the charter interpretation.

- **Citizens' Comments**

The meeting opened the floor for citizens' comments, with rules of decorum reiterated for public participation.

Conclusion

1. A formal warning was issued to all city council members to adhere to decorum rules.

2. December 3, 9, and 27 meeting minutes were approved with noted corrections.
3. It was clarified that council attendance is not required for public hearings under Georgia law.

2. City Development and Community Support Initiatives

- **URA Projects**
[Adrienne Williams] outlined upcoming URA projects, including hiring a cleanup crew for the Gordon Street School, weatherproofing, obtaining liability insurance, hiring a part-time project manager, and reimbursing a consultant. A drone survey was conducted to measure the school buildings for plans.
- **Community Progress**
[Archie Acree] commended the city administrator for progress in uniting the city and improving communication with citizens. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and support for community programs.
- **AAU Program Support**
[Archie Acree] advocated support of an AAU program for children, highlighting its benefits and the need for financial assistance. He urged the council to consider the proposal and support the program to provide positive activities for youth.
- **Budget and Power Supply Issues**
[Councilman Mahoney] and [Will Long] discussed potential budget shortfalls due to power supply issues. They are working with Georgia Power and other entities to find solutions and minimize revenue loss.
- **City Attorney Appointment**
The council discussed the annual appointment of the city attorney, with [Adam Nelson] clarifying the contractual terms. The decision was postponed for further consideration and potential advertisement for the position.

Conclusion

1. These projects are planned for the first few months of the year.
2. The city is progressing, but further efforts are needed to strengthen community ties.
3. The council is encouraged to review the AAU program proposal.
4. Efforts are ongoing to address power supply issues and budget impacts.
5. The decision on the city attorney appointment was postponed for further discussion.

3. City Council Meeting Discussions and Administrative Updates

- **Executive Session Discussion**
There was a proposal to discuss certain matters in an executive session,

but it was clarified that this is only permissible for personnel issues. The discussion was redirected to the regular session.

- **Motion for City Attorney appointment**

A motion was made and seconded to move forward with the appointment of the Nelson Law Group for city matters. The council members unanimously approved the motion.

- **City Administrator's Updates**

The City Administrator provided updates on various initiatives, including improving the personnel handbook, modernizing city forms, and considering outsourcing payroll. A proposal for a new communications and PR director's position was also discussed.

Conclusion

1. The motion to appoint the Nelson Law Group was unanimously approved.

4. City governance and administrative policies

- **City Communication PR Director Position**

The discussion centered on proposing a new City Communication PR Director position. Some members expressed concerns about the necessity and budget for this role, while others emphasized the need for clear policies and procedures.

- **Appointment of Judge Kidd**

The council discussed Judge Kidd's reappointment. The length of the contract was debated, with some members advocating for a one-year term instead of two.

- **Policy for Nonprofit and Private Organizations**

The council reviewed a policy requiring nonprofits and private organizations to provide financial accountability for funds received from the city. The city administrator will oversee this process.

Conclusion

1. The council agreed on a one-year contract for Judge Kidd.

5. Financial transparency and accountability in city funding allocations.

- **Financial Accountability**

The meeting discussed the need for financial transparency and accountability for organizations receiving city funds. The council emphasized the importance of knowing how funds are spent and required detailed reports and receipts from organizations.

- **Budget Allocation**

The council discussed budget allocations for various entities, including Parks and Rec, WCCP, and URA. Concerns were raised about the lack of clarity on how additional funds would be used.

- **Non-Profit Funding**

There was a debate on whether the city should allocate funds to private non-profit organizations. Some council members argued that these should be funded through private donations.

- **Transparency and Access to Information**

The council discussed the need for transparency and easy access to information regarding the activities and spending of city-funded organizations.

Conclusion

1. A proposal requires organizations to submit detailed spending plans and receipts before receiving funds.
2. The council requires organizations to provide clear justifications for additional funding requests.
3. The council agreed to evaluate funding requests based on the benefit to the city.
4. It was agreed that meeting minutes and financial reports should be made accessible to the council and the public.
5. **Addition to the minutes, specifying that non-profits can be funded under contract if they benefit citizens/city.**

6. City Council Meeting Discussions

- **Personnel Matters**

The meeting discussed personnel matters, including council appointments and issues related to employees' driving. Specific details were not disclosed as these are sensitive topics.

- **DOT Road Swap Resolution**

Councilman Anderson discussed re-engaging with the Department of Transportation (DOT) for a road swap to address the issue of large commercial trucks on State Roads, particularly Highway 47 and potentially Highway 44. The resolution aims to formalize the city's request to DOT.

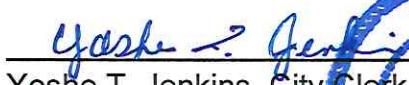
- **Municipal Judge Term Amendment**

Georgia has mandated a two-year term for municipal judges instead of one year. The council discussed amending the contract to comply with this new requirement.

Conclusion

1. The resolution will be prepared for the next meeting, including language for Highway 44.
2. The council unanimously approved the motion to amend Judge Kidd's contract to a two-year term.


Bruce A. Bailey, Mayor


Yoshe T. Jenkins, City Clerk



AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF GEORGIA
CITY OF WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2025

Washington, Georgia's mayor, and City Council went into executive session at 7:12 p.m. on January 13, 2025.

The following members were present: Mayor Bruce Bailey, Newton Gunter, David Fisher, Jr., Larry Hill, Nathaniel Cullars, Sr., Maceo Mahoney, and Andy Anderson. Attorney Adam Nelson was also present.

A quorum was present, and Mayor Bruce Bailey called the meeting to order and presided over it.

3. Executive Session Summary

During the executive session, the council discussed two personnel matters and two litigation matters. No final actions were taken on these matters.

No final action taken.

The open session was reconvened.

1. Settlement Agreement

A motion was made to authorize the mayor to sign a \$1,170.05 settlement agreement with Bobby Gene McAllister to resolve claims related to personal vehicle damage.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. An amendment to the Employment Agreement

A motion was proposed to amend the employment agreement with Will Long to replace the term 'Mayor' with 'Mayor and City Council'.

Motion approved unanimously.

5. Payment to Former Employees

A motion was made to authorize payment to former employees eligible for vacation time in accordance with the policy.


Motion approved unanimously.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Cullars, second by Gunter.

Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned.


Bruce A. Bailey, Mayor


Yoshe T. Jenkins, Clerk

