

MINUTES OF THE WASHINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

September 8, 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 their regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. Councilmembers present were Fisher, Gunter, Hill, and Cullars. Councilmember Anderson was not present.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting began with an invocation led by Councilman Larry Hill, followed by a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of August 11, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes

Councilman Nathaniel Cullars' motion for a change in minutes to include the councilman's full name in addition to only the councilman's surname or initials
Councilman Nathaniel Cullars moved to approve the minutes, and
Councilman Larry Hill seconded this motion. Voted as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Larry Hill motioned to add an agenda item to discuss qualifying dates for the general election. Mayor Councilman Newton Gunter moved to approve the agenda, and Councilman Larry Hill seconded, voted as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment Rules and Decorum

Each public speaker was allotted three minutes, with no time donation allowed.
Comments must be directed to the mayor or presiding officer, and personal attacks or disruptive behavior are prohibited.

Councilman Nathaniel Cullars motioned for discussion:

Legal Counsel advised the following:

Current ordinances do not address donations of public comment time. The mayor has discretion over meeting procedures unless the council votes to change the rules. The city attorney advised that the council could suspend rules or amend ordinances for future meetings.

Public Comments

Nathaniel Fanning: Writes plays and wants to partner to produce them at the Little Theater.

Rebecca Preston (Lion in the Hare Contractors): Asserted business legitimacy; called for accountability regarding alleged defamation and harassment; criticized the council for favoritism.

Daphane Dooley:

Angela Fanning: Raised concerns about personal attacks on Councilman Cullars; criticized the mayor's use of personal Facebook for city business, and alleged open records violations.

Erica Favors: False qualifying dates for the November general election were posted on the mayor's Facebook page; official qualifying took place from August 18 to 22, 2025—criticism of election information handling and alleged suppression of African American voices.

John Wiley: Called for fairness, transparency, and accountability in city government.

Jan Anderson: Announced a grant opportunity to bring music to the city; the community must vote by September 15.

Roxanne Cobb: Thanked the council for support; addressed rumors and expressed gratitude.

Marion Tutt: Highlighted ongoing water issues, including a daily loss of ~400,000 gallons; requested prioritization of water infrastructure in future grants.

Archie Acree: Advocated for unity between districts and mutual understanding for community progress.

Departmental Reports and Budget Discussions

Parks and Recreation

The 2026 budget was discussed, with \$10,000 allocated to the boxing group (more than other sports entities). Parks and Recreation is responsible for maintaining building upkeep and updating equipment. Budget allocations are subject to council approval, and the committee will raise concerns.

City Attorney Discussion Items:

Approval for the Mayor to sign a Resolution & Contract for Legal Services AFFF PFAS Litigation. The city was approached to join a class-action lawsuit regarding PFAS contamination. Free water sampling offered; if PFAS is found, attorneys will pursue settlement funds for remediation. Motion was made by Nathaniel Cullars and seconded by Newton Gunter. Vote as follows.

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously

City Administrator Discussion/Action Items

Entering an Intergovernmental agreement regarding FLOST

House Bill 581 and the FLOST Ballot Agreement Council approved enrollment in House Bill 581 (Homestead Bill) and an intergovernmental agreement with the county to place FLOST (sales tax for property tax rollback) on the ballot. The collection begins in 2026; the rollback takes effect in 2027. Motion was made by Councilmember Newton Gunter and seconded by Councilmember Cullars. Vote as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Millage Rate Proposal

Proposed millage rate of 8.32 (0.48% increase)

Motion by Councilmember Nathaniel Cullars, seconded by Councilmember Larry Hill. Vote as follows

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

New Travel Policy

The travel policy has been updated to remove lodging expense limits, as the city now handles all bookings—further refinements will be discussed at the council retreat after the special election.

Tabled to review more.

Water update – Base Rate

The council was informed about the aging water system and that a large-scale, longer-term initiative is being planned to rectify and replace the city's water and sewage system. Funded by grants, annual budgeting, change in base rate, and low-interest loans.

PPAC (Power Cost Adjustment) Explanation

PPAC on electric bills reflects commodity-based power generation costs and stabilizes bills. Rates have not increased since 2019.

Andrew Drive Update

Bids have been received, and work will begin soon. Waiting for applicable grant approval to determine if the approved funds can be applied towards an In-Kind payment for the grant. The cost of repairs is approximately \$750,000 to \$1,000,000.

Rusher Street Update

Work on the Fence has commenced and is expected to be completed within the week. Reminder: Once work on the Rusher Street fence is completed, the property owners will be responsible for ongoing maintenance.

Museum Cleanup

Work is currently being done. This project has taken longer than estimated due to weather conditions and the challenging terrain of the property, with the ground being extremely saturated; patience was required before the heavy equipment could be moved onto the property. Work is expected to be completed soon.

Mayor's Discussion Items:

None

Councilmember Discussion, Applicable Motions and Votes:

- **URA Funding Request:**

Motion: Councilmember Larry Hill motioned to approve the requested funding for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of \$75,000 over 12 months, with a monthly stipend for the remainder of the current budget year. Second, Councilmember Nathaniel Cullars votes as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

- **4E Group Funding Request**

Motion: Councilmember Larry Hill, second: Councilmember Nathaniel Cullars \$60,000 annual funding approved, paid as \$5,000 monthly stipends for the remainder of the calendar year. Funding is contingent upon compliance and the provision of benefits or services to the city. The city administrator will monitor and report back to the council. Votes as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Denied

David Fisher – Denied

Larry Hill – Approved

Mayor Burce Bailey – Approved

Result: Motion passed 2 /2 Mayor broke the tie to approve

- **Election Qualifying Dates and Process**

Councilman Anderson, Cullars, and Hill are up for re-election. Qualifying did not occur as scheduled; only special election qualifying was held. The qualifying period will take place from September 22 to 25, 2025. The city clerk set the election dates; the council does not vote on these. Public notification and transparency are emphasized, with a press release recommended after the executive session.

- **Quality and Service Calls**

Brown water complaints are being addressed; residents should report issues to City Hall for prompt service. Service tickets are reviewed daily.

- **City Website Redesign**

Council approved a three-year website redesign package (~\$56,000), including staff training and support. Work to be bonded for security, and the decision-making process moving forward will be handled by City Administrator Will Long. Councilmember Larry Hill motioned to approve, Seconded by Councilmember Nathaniel Cullars and voted as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

- **Municipal Complex Signage**

City Hall complex to be renamed “Edward Burns Municipal Complex.” The council authorized the administrator to proceed with the sign project, with a target completion date of November.

- **Public Apology and Employee Conduct**

Councilman Gunter issued a public apology for unfounded comments made at the August meeting, emphasizing the importance of fair treatment and proper investigation of employee concerns.

- **Executive Session**

Councilman Cullars made a motion, seconded by Councilman Hill, to go into executive session. Votes as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Approved

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

- **Return to the Regular Session and proceed to cast any necessary votes.**

Attorney Nelson: 1 Personnel Matters. No action was taken.

Councilman Newton Gunter motioned to set the dates for the election qualifying period as September 22-25, 2025. Councilmember David Fisher was second. Vote as follows:

Nathaniel Cullars - Denied

Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Denied

Mayor Burce Bailey – Approved

Result: Motion passed 2 /2 Mayor broke the tie to approve

- **Adjournment**

Councilman Nathaniel Cullars moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Larry Hill. Vote as follows:


Nathaniel Cullars - Approved


Newton Gunter – Approved

David Fisher – Approved

Larry Hill – Approved

Result: Motion passed unanimously.


Bruce A. Bailey, Mayor


Yoshe T. Jenkins, City Clerk



ATTEST

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF GEORGIA CITY
OF WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

September 8, 2025

Washington, Georgia's mayor and City Council went into executive session on September 8, 2025.

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

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

Executive Session Summary

During the executive session, the council discussed one personnel matter. No action was taken.

The open session was reconvened at 8:40 pm.



Bruce A. Bailey, Mayor



Yoshe T. Jenkins, Clerk
ATTEST

