

MINUTES OF THE WASHINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

August 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

**EDWARD B. POPE CONFERENCE CENTER
48B Lexington Avenue, Washington, GA 30673**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Bailey presided.

2. ROLL CALL

- Council Member Fisher — Present
- Council Member Hill — Present
- Council Member Gunter — Present
- Council Member Wiggs — Present
- Council Member Branan — Present
- Council Member Rainey — Present

Also present: Mayor Bailey, City Manager Long, City Attorney Nelson, City Clerk Jenkins, and Assistant City Clerk Ivey.

• INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was delivered by Councilwoman Susan Branan. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

• APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as presented.

Made by: Council Member Newt Gunter

Seconded by: Council Member Susan Branan

Discussion: None.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Yea
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 6-Yea / 0-Nay, with 0 absent.

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of June 8, 2026, Regular Council Meeting as corrected.

Made by: Council Member Newt Gunter

Second by: Council Member Susan Branan

Discussion: Council Member Branan noted a correction from “4U” to “4E,” which staff had corrected.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Yea
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 6-Yea / 0-Nay, with 0 absent.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, special meeting.

Made by: Council Member Calvin Wiggs

Seconded by: Council Member Susan Branan

Discussion. None.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Yea
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 6-Yea / 0-Nay, with 0 absent.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC HEARING**

- **Rules of Decorum Update (Informational)**

- Speaker: Mike Hartman — Topic: Black History Committee collaboration with Chamber of Commerce to add QR codes and

expanded content to historical markers and the Chamber's Black History webpage; thanked Council for support.

- • Speaker: Laura Toburen — Topic: Invitation to Veterans Day ceremony on November 11 at 11:00 AM on the square; stated required paperwork would be completed with the City.
- • Speaker: Angela Novelli — Topic: Announcement of a Small Business Symposium on October 5–6 in partnership with UGA SBDC; noted participation fee and format; referenced previously approved fire hydrant painting initiative.
- • Speaker: Archie Acree — Topic: Requested that Council decisions reflect constituent input and the majority voice; expressed concerns regarding representation and confidence in officials.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

Bypass Resolution Status

Discussion Summary: City Attorney Nelson reported that a prior Council action approving a bypass-related resolution was already in effect and that no action was required at this meeting. He stated he would coordinate with the Mayor and City Clerk to transmit the resolution to state legislators and would update Council as needed.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

School Street Park Naming Signage Update

Discussion Summary: Council Member Gunter reported that the previously approved name of School Street Park for Elijah Anderson had been acted upon and that the park sign was in production, with installation and a forthcoming announcement anticipated. City Manager Long indicated costs would align with existing sign standards and be covered within budget.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

Public Works Director Transition and Hiring Process

Discussion Summary: At Council Member Hill's request, City Manager Long reported that the former Public Works Director had retired and that an internal candidate who had been trained for the role was serving in an acting capacity during an evaluation period. City Manager Long outlined the hiring approach, prioritizing internal candidates; EMA-related training is underway; and District 1 and District 2 representatives would participate in interviews for positions of \$40,000 or more, consistent with policy.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

Animal Control Coordination and Retreat Discussion

Discussion Summary: Council Member Branan raised citizen concerns regarding stray animals in various areas of the city and requested discussion at the August retreat, noting county coordination and a proposal from the animal shelter regarding pickups for a fee. City Manager Long discussed operational and capacity considerations, budget implications, and the need to evaluate facility resources and costs in partnership with the county.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

Millage Rate Status and HB 581 (Informational)

Discussion Summary: City Manager Long advised that the proposed 2026 millage rate would remain at 8.3200 or lower at this time and explained that, following enactment of HB 581 and commencement of sales tax collections in January, a full year of revenue data would inform subsequent rollbacks to property taxes. He stated no vote was required at this meeting and responded to questions regarding potential future reductions.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

Proclamation Recognizing Mr. Willie Jackson

Discussion Summary: Mayor Bailey announced a proclamation recognizing Mr. Willie Jackson, a 1977 graduate of Washington-Wilkes High School and longtime Disney PhotoPass photographer, for receiving the Walt Disney Legacy Award in 2025. Mayor Bailey stated he would present the proclamation to Mr. Jackson at City Hall on Friday at 2:00 PM and invited Council Members to attend. It was noted that all Council Members' names would be included in the proclamation and that signatures would be coordinated by the City Clerk.

MOTION: [No action requested or taken.]

Proposed Charter Amendment — Qualifications for Mayor and Council

Discussion Summary: Council Member Branan introduced a motion to request legislative amendment to the City Charter to set minimum qualifications for Mayor and Council. City Attorney Nelson advised that the General Assembly enacts charter changes and that a referendum is not required unless the legislature mandates it; Council may forward multiple charter changes as adopted.

MOTION: To approve submitting to the legislature an amendment to the City Charter to provide that any person qualified to vote for Mayor and Council is eligible to hold office if at least twenty-five (25) years of age; has been a resident of the City of Washington for a minimum of twelve

(12) months at the time of qualifying; is a resident of the district they are representing for twelve (12) months at the time of qualifying; and maintains a primary permanent residence in the City of Washington during years of service, if elected.

Made by: Council Member Susan Branan

Seconded by: Council Member Newt Gunter

Discussion: Council discussed outreach to younger residents and the option of bundling charter amendments; City Attorney Nelson clarified legislative procedures for charter amendments.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Nay
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 5-Yea / 1-Nay, with 0 absences.

Boxing Group Lease — Hold in Abeyance

Discussion Summary: Council Member Hill moved to place the current lease with the boxing group on hold pending clarification of policies and procedures and reconciliation with prior lease documentation. No second was made.

MOTION: To place the current lease for the boxing group on hold until lease documentation and policies are clarified.

Made by: Council Member Larry Hill

Seconded by: [No second — motion failed for lack of a second.]

Discussion: None.

• **REPORTS**

City Manager Long's Report

- Noted pending completion of roadway striping on Andrew Drive by the contractor; reported that the former Public Works Director had retired and an internal candidate is in an acting role; and reviewed the HB 581 implementation timeline.
- Reported that lightning struck a water tower, causing significant damage that staff repaired, returning the tower to service after approximately 48 hours.

- Provided updates on the Pecan Street water line project, the Jackson Heights water loop project, the poor condition of the water intake structure, and the pursuit of a grant for its repair.
- Reported on a potential data center in the county and the Walldogs mural project, a citizen-led initiative to be funded by donations.
- Noted that the City has not received a formal response from Habitat for Humanity, and the YMCA expressed interest in partnering with the housing authority.
- Clarified that leases of city buildings are not required by ordinance to be approved by Council, but sales of property do require Council approval.
- Noted scheduling conflicts due to required attendance at power generation meetings on the nineteenth and twentieth.
Reported on a potential data center in the county and the Walldogs mural project, a citizen-led initiative to be funded by donations.
Noted that the City has not received a formal response from Habitat for Humanity, and the YMCA expressed interest in partnering with the housing authority.
Clarified that leases of city buildings are not required by ordinance to be approved by Council, but sales of property do require Council approval.
Noted scheduling conflicts due to required attendance at power generation meetings on the nineteenth and twentieth.

Department Reports

- Community, board, and authority reports were submitted; no action requested.

Mayor Bailey's Comments

- Noted the meaningfulness of the Memorial Day ceremony, where every U.S. military branch except the Space Force was represented, and thanked the organizers.
- Requested Council Members review committee, board, and authority assignments and provide updates at future meetings.
- Stated that both splash pads were directed to open by the Friday before Memorial Day and that he instructed that maintenance be rotated so one facility remains open at all times.

Council Comments

- Council Member Branan thanked volunteers for painting the basketball court and the Water and Public Works Departments for recent work; she requested an animal control discussion at the August retreat.
- Council Member Gunter provided an update on Elijah Anderson Park signage progress.

- Council Member Rainey requested regular updates on the City's water plan, noted the county's jurisdiction over a potential data center, and emphasized the urgency of a charter review retreat.
- Council Member Wiggs noted participation levels in a recent youth program.
- Council Member Hill requested continued updates and participation in the Public Works Director hiring process and addressed funding and governance concerns related to the animal shelter.

• **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion: To enter Executive Session

Made by: Council Member Susan Branan

Seconded by: Council Member Kimberly Rainey

Discussion: None.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Nay
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 6-Yea / 0-Nay, with 0 absences.

The Council entered Executive Session under O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1) (personnel) and (b)(2) (real estate) at 7:10 PM. The Council returned to open session at 8:15 PM. Mayor Bailey signed an executive session affidavit. The Council took no final action in executive session.

Action Taken After Return to Open Session:

Item: Employment Agreement — City Manager

Summary: City Attorney Nelson outlined proposed terms for an employment agreement with City Manager Long: a three-year term, an annual salary of \$185,000, and included terms and benefits.

MOTION: To approve extending an employment agreement to City Manager Long for a three-year term with an annual salary of \$185,000, including terms and benefits as discussed.

Made by: Council Member Newt Gunter

Seconded by: Council Member David Fisher

Discussion: None.

Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Nay
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Result: Motion carried by a vote of 5-Yea / 1-Nay, with 0 absences.

• **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: To adjourn.

Made by: Council Member Branan

Seconded by: Council Member Rainey

Discussion: None.

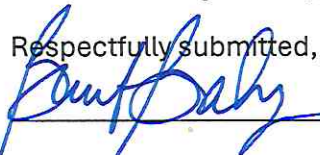
Vote (Roll Call):

- Council Member Fisher — Yea
- Council Member Hill — Yea
- Council Member Gunter — Yea
- Council Member Wiggs — Yea
- Council Member Branan — Yea
- Council Member Rainey — Yea

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Bruce A. Bailey



Yoshe T. Jenkins, City Clerk



AFFIDAVIT
STATE OF GEORGIA
CITY OF WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

August 10, 2026

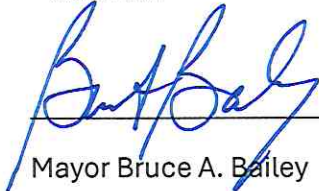
Washington, Georgia's Mayor and City Council went into executive session on August 10, 2026, at 7:10 PM.

The following members were present: Mayor Bruce Bailey, Councilwoman Kimberly J. Rainey, Councilman Newton Gunter, Councilman David Fisher, Councilman Larry Hill, Councilwoman Susan Branan, Councilman Calvin J. Wiggs III, and Attorney Adam Nelson.

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

Executive Session Summary

The Council entered Executive Session under O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1) (personnel) and (b)(2) (real estate) at 7:10 PM. The Council returned to open session at 8:15 PM. The Council took no final action in executive session.



Mayor Bruce A. Bailey





Yoshe T. Jenkins, City Clerk