

MINUTES

City Council Meeting Monday, October 6, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Opening: Mayor Campbell offered the Invocation and led the City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

City Council Members: Mayor Bruce Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Daniell, Councilmember Natalyn Morris, Councilmember Debbie Ruiz and Councilmember Kim Tice. Councilmember Richard Lassiter arrived after roll call at 6:12pm. Councilmember Gwyn Hall was absent.

Staff Members: James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Brian Hood, Police Department Administrative Commander; Cliff Ducey, Parks and Recreation Director; Lynnette Hymes, Public Works/Water Operations Executive Assistant; Veronica Enoch, Executive Assistant to the City Manager; Tonya Roper, Clerk of Council; and Andrew Guzman, IT Tech. Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, City Manager was absent.

Presentations:

Mayor Campbell presented a proclamation designating September 15, 2025 through October 15, 2025 as National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Mayor Campbell presented a proclamation designating November 2, 2025 as “Retired Educators Day.”

Formal Public Comment:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Shy Duncan; Grants Specialist with the Coastal Resources Division requests to address the City Council about the Coastal Incentive Grant Program including upcoming Cycle 29 deadlines and available funding.

Shy Duncan stated she serves as the Grants Coordinator for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division. She stated she is here to provide information about the Coastal Incentive Grant. The grant is a competitive pass-through grant program and is made possible by a federal grant from NOAA. Approximately \$750k of the program is annually afforded to sub grants, which is about 40% of the annual grant. These dollars are passed through to available communities and/or research institutions within the 11 coastal counties which includes the six ocean facing counties and the five second tier counties.

Ms. Duncan continued by saying that Garden City is among those eligible for these funds. The goal of the CIT program is to support the coastal management program’s mission – our mission is to balance economic development in Georgia’s coastal area to preserve the natural environmental, historical, archaeological, and recreational resources for the benefit of Georgia’s present and future

generations. We also want to address local and regional coastal resource protection priorities, and we want to support research in areas of specific coastal management needs.

Ms. Duncan stated that each project must fit under one of the approved themes. These themes are recommended by the CRD staff and then approved by the coastal advisory council. For this year for Cycle 29, the approved themes are sustainable communities, oceans and wetlands, public access and land conservation, disaster resiliency, coastal hazards, and nature -based solutions. Each approved project can receive up to \$80,000 in funding for planning, education, research, and/ or construction acquisition projects. Coastal incentive grants require a 1:1 match; making a two-year project's maximum award amount of \$160k. Project funds and tasks cannot cross years, and a final report will be due at the end of each year.

Ms. Duncan provided an overview of the Cycle 29 timeline as provided on the Cycle 29 flyer and stated the pre-application is due December 5th, with a Cycle 29 start date of October 1st, 2026. She said the QR code and weblinks provide additional information from the website.

Ms. Duncan stated Garden City has been awarded this funding in Cycle 14 and Cycle 15, which was year 2011 and 2012. This project funding consisted of Disaster Resilient Community and within the project, Garden City accomplished a coastal hazard risk in vulnerability assessment for West Chatham. Achievements included a greenhouse gas emissions footprint inventory, a GIS database planning tool, all hazards emergency operation plan as well as an update to the Garden City Comprehensive Plan along with an update of the City's development codes and review procedures, and local leader education workshops.

Ms. Duncan finished by stating Garden City also received funds in Cycle 16 in 2013 for Stormwater Master Plan. She said this information is to let you know that these funds are available and free applications are being accepted.

Councilmember Morris thanked Ms. Duncan for the information and stated she is glad to know the City was awarded those funds in the previous years.

Ms. Duncan stated previous reports are available for review and can be provided to the City upon request.

Groves High School CTAE Program: Nina Bryant-Hunter; Work Based Learning Coordinator request to address the City Council about the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education program for Groves High School known as The GHS Industrial Academy.

Dr. Gina Smith stated she is the CTAE Department Head of Groves High School. Dr. Smith stated a career fair was conducted, and we were able to have Garden City come out to the career fair thanks to Councilmember Moris.

Dr. Smith stated we want to address Council to let you know what we do in this program. The program is to provide building futures together by strengthening pathways from Groves High School to the Garden City workforce, and we want to know what we can do for you.

Dr. Smith said we are the instructors; we're not teachers. We bridge the gap for teachers and are instructors that are out of the industry. The instructors come in to teach the students about what we know and provide further clarification in the profession that we do. The career pathways we have are logistics supply chain, aviation maintenance, heavy equipment, business and technology, Cybersecurity, financial literacy, food and nutrition and junior ROTC – where all the students can receive industry approved certifications. The aviation maintenance program is funded by Gulfstream and allows students to enter the workforce as interns at the age of 18. For the logistics and supply chain pathway, we supply employees to Colonial, Port City and to the Ports.

Dr. Smith stated the training includes employability skills for OSHA, TWIC cards, AI and Hazmat. She said the goal is to change socio economic situations at Groves through the training center. The labs within the training center mimic the industries. The new heavy equipment pathway has allowed the program's first employee to work with CW Matthews which is Georgia Highway. These programs have benefited those who do not go to college directly from high school.

Dr. Smith said the program includes employee building skills to include arrival to work on time, being professionally dressed, knowing how to communicate and critical thinking. The students are held accountable for these employee building skills using a points system via the school. The community engagement includes signing day, cap graduation, OSHA celebration, college and career day, and choice night. The community engagement includes Garden City, Savannah, Port Wentworth and Pooler.

Dr. Smith finished by saying a workforce development connection is needed. This is the connection for students with local businesses to coordinate internships and mentorship programs. This person will collaborate with Garden City employers to identify workforce needs and tailor student training accordingly. Students are needed in these industries as current employees are retiring.

Councilmember Lassiter thanked Dr. Smith for providing the information to Council

Councilmember Daniel asked Dr. Smith to reach out to the City's Human Resources department as a connection.

Dr. Smith replied that the City provided a human resources representative at the fair. She offered Council a tour of the training center.

Councilmember Morris stated she has known Dr. Smith and the affiliation with the pathway program. She said the training center is awesome and mimics the industry of the workforce programs. Councilmember Morris said this program involves topnotch industries.

Councilmember Daniel said she is impressed with the program and asked if there are plans to expand into additional programs.

Dr. Smith replied yes, there are plans for expanding into manufacturing with robotics, coding and AI projects.

Informal Public Comment: Given no comments, Mayor Campbell closed the section for informal public comment.

Public Hearings:

Mayor Campbell opened the Public Hearing for receipt of public comment on an alcoholic beverage license application made by Dhruvitaben Patel to sell wines, beer, and/or malt beverages at Omshiva25, (D/B/A) JK Food Mart, 4918 Ogeechee Road, Garden City, Georgia.

With no comments, Mayor Campbell closed the Public Hearing.

City Council Minutes: Councilmember Ruiz made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 15th Pre-Agenda session and City Council meeting minutes and September 22nd Workshop meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Daniel and passed with Councilmember Daniel, Councilmember Lassiter, Councilmember Morris, Councilmember Ruiz, and Mayor Campbell voting in favor of the motion. Councilmember Tice stated she is voting in favor of the motion to approve the September 15th Pre-Agenda and City Council meeting minutes and will abstain from voting for the September 22nd Workshop meeting minutes due to absence.

Items for Consideration:

Mayor Campbell called for a motion to adopt the resolutions for Personnel Policy and Procedures for the Uniform Policy, Vehicle Policy and Pet Policy.

- **Resolution – Personnel Policy and Procedures (Uniform Policy):** A resolution to amend the city's Personnel Policy and Procedures Employment Manual to include a uniform policy regulating the issuance, use, maintenance and replacement of uniforms and safety/protective apparel which are worn by staff in certain departments and job positions.
- **Resolution – Personnel Policy and Procedures (Vehicle Policy):** A resolution to amend the city's Personnel Policy and Procedures Employment Manual related to the use of City Vehicles to better ensure the safe and cost-effective management of the city's vehicle fleet.
- **Resolution – Personnel Policy and Procedures (Pet Policy):** A resolution to amend the city's Personnel Policy and Procedures Employment Manual to include a pet policy restricting the bringing of pets into City Buildings and facilities with the exception of a qualified service animal as defined by 28 CFR 36.104.

Councilmember Lassiter motioned to adopt the resolutions for the uniform policy, vehicle policy and pet policy. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Daniel and passed with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Personnel Policy and Procedures (PTO Leave Policy Update): A resolution amending the city's Personnel Policy and Procedure Employment Manual to permit city employees on Worker's Compensation leave to use accrued Paid Time Off and Paid Critical Leave to supplement Worker's

Compensation benefits to the extent of the difference between the Worker's Compensation payments and their average weekly wages.

Councilmember Morris made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Lassiter seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Travel Policy Update: The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution adopting an updated travel policy and procedures for City Officials and employees relating to travel advances and reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred in conducting official city business; providing for authorization and implementation; repealing all prior resolutions and policies in conflict herewith; and providing for an effective date.

Councilmember Ruiz made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion. The motion passes with Councilmember Daniel, Councilmember Ruiz, Councilmember Tice and Mayor Campbell voting in favor of the motion. Councilmember Lassiter and Councilmember Morris voted in opposition of the motion.

Resolution – County-Wide Homeless Strategies Plan: The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by Mayor and Council supporting the Savannah-Chatham County Interagency Council five-year (5) strategic plan to end homelessness.

Councilmember Lassiter made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Xylem Water Solutions USA Agreement (Highway 80 Lift Station): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by the Mayor and Council authorizing the City Manager to approve the purchase of a Flygt Submersible Pump in the amount of \$25,897.00 for replacement of a curve pump at the Highway 80 lift station.

Councilmember Daniel made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ruiz seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Xylem Water Solutions USA Agreement (Covington Avenue Lift Station): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by Mayor and Council authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with Xylem Water Solutions USA in the amount of \$45,014.92 for the install of a new control panel on the sewer lift station on Covington Avenue.

Councilmember Lassiter made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Engineered Spray Solutions Proposal Agreement (Covington Avenue Lift Station): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by Mayor and Council authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with Engineered Spray Solutions in the amount of \$33,457.00 for the polyurethane protective coating services to protect the structure and seal barriers in order to prevent corrosion and water infiltration on the Covington Avenue sewer lift station.

Councilmember Ruiz made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Enterprise Fleet Management Trust Agreement: The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution to approve the lease-purchasing of six (6) police vehicles from Enterprise FM Trust to be added to the city's vehicle fleet.

Councilmember Ruiz made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Resolution – Savannah River Utilities Co. Proposal Agreement (Redmond Avenue): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution to approve emergency repairs to a roadside culvert, road pavement, and adjacent properties on Redmond Avenue damaged by a non-functioning drainage system.

Councilmember Tice made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ruiz and passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Alcoholic Beverage License Application: The Clerk of Council read the heading for consideration by Mayor and Council of an alcoholic beverage license application made by Dhruvitaben Patel to sell wines, beer, and/or malt beverages at Omshiva25, (D/B/A) JK Food Mart, 4918 Ogeechee Road, Garden City, Georgia.

Mayor Campbell asked Major Hood for confirmation of no issues with the application process.

Major Hood replied there were no issues with the application.

Councilmember Lassiter made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Daniel seconded the motion, the motion passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Adjournment: Councilmember Lassiter made a motion to adjourn at approximately 6:42pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ruiz and passed without opposition.

*Transcribed & submitted by: The Clerk of Council
Accepted & approved by: The City Council on 10-20-25*