

MINUTES

City Council Meeting Monday, September 15, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

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

Opening: Councilmember Hall gave the invocation and Mayor Campbell led the City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

City Council Members: Mayor Bruce Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Daniel, Councilmember Gwyn Hall, Councilmember Natalyn Morris, Councilmember Debbie Ruiz and Councilmember Kim Tice. Councilmember Richard Lassiter was absent.

Staff Members: Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, City Manager; James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Brian Hood, Police Department Administrative Commander; Cliff Ducey, Parks and Recreation Director; Carlos Nevarez, Interim Assistant Planning Director; Virgil Moore, Public Works Director; Tonya Roper, Clerk of Council; and Andrew Guzman, IT Tech.

Formal Public Comment: The Front Porch – Mr. Cargile, Family Engagement and Activities Coordinator for The Front Porch requests to address the City Council about the Youth Mentoring HUB which connect parents with mentors for their children and link volunteer mentors to youth mentoring agencies.

Shawnessy Cargile stated he previously spoke on a Council agenda about how The Front Porch organization in Savannah works with families and children. He said we are a youth assessment center that works to connect families to resources for their kids. The connections include after school tutoring, mentoring, mental health therapy and psychological testing – whatever it may be to help a child thrive mentally, physically, socially or academically. This is a free program, and anyone can refer a child to the program.

Mr. Cargile continued by providing an overview of the assessment process in order to determine where the gaps are happening in the child's life. The assessment process includes communication via phone or home visit with the child and adult. The goal is to determine the resources needed so that a struggling youth does not become involved with the juvenile court system and to provide the support before a struggling youth starts in the direction towards the wrong path.

Mr. Cargile talked about the brochure for the program including a pamphlet for the Savannah Youth Mentoring Hub and discussed features of the enrollment process, services and resources that take into account each family's unique needs, and a QR code that can be scanned by any adult to make a referral on behalf of a family or child. The referral can be made by a teacher, social worker, City Council member or grandparent.

Mr. Cargile said the Hub is 17 different organizations around Chatham County that do youth mentoring. The collaboration of the multiple organizations on the Hub is so that parents can go to one location on the internet at savyouthmentoring.org for services and resource connections. This website also allows volunteers to sign up to become mentors.

Councilmember Daniel asked what is the age requirement for the program?

Mr. Cargile replied that the youngest child that we may see is five years old up to seventeen years old. Most of the mentoring hub participants are under the age of 18 years of age. We also have a couple of programs that work with young adults at the age of 22 or 23 years old. It's a variety, as some of the programs focus on children under the age of 10 with other programs focusing on teenagers.

Councilmember Ruiz said do you get a lot of recommendations from the schools?

Mr. Cargile said for The Front Porch, itself, about 70% of the children that we see get referred by the school. The hope is before a child is going to get suspended, expelled or failing a class that they'll refer them to us early so that we can try to create a plan with the parent and the school. He said we would also like to see referrals from Garden City Police for any interactions with juveniles that does not need to lead to an arrest so that we can figure out what may be missing and help that family get connected.

Councilmember Hall asked for a link or a reference that could be provided to the youth director in his church for this program.

Mr. Cargile provided brochures and pamphlets for anyone wanting to distribute the information about the available services and resources. Mr. Cargile continued by extending an offer to come to churches, health fairs, and events to speak with parents and youth to inform them that there are outlets available when times get tough.

He said we do not officially mentor the parents through the mentor hub but through The Front Porch when a child is referred, half of the conversation assessment is with the child, and the other half is with the parents in order to figure out both perspectives. The focus is the resources of what the child needs. Some of the concerns from the parent may be the financial costs involved with the services provided.

Councilmember Daniel asked if the program has drug rehab?

Mr. Cargile replied no, but if that is something that is relevant in helping a child, then we would try to steer that parent in that direction. He finished by saying The Front Porch was started by the Chatham County Juvenile Courts as a way to keep kids from getting into the juvenile courts. Whether the child is low risk or high risk, we want to see all of them in order to try to help.

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

City Council Minutes: Councilmember Tice made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18th Pre-Agenda session and City Council meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ruiz and passes with all voting in favor of the motion.

Items for Consideration:

Resolution – Debris Staging Site Agreement (1342 Dean Forest Road): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by the Mayor and Council authorizing the execution of a lease agreement with Katherine C. Ward, Jim Rabbon Ward, III, and Melissa Albrecht for use of a 6.14 acre parcel located at 1342 Dean Forest Road for use as a temporary debris staging and reduction site to store, manage and reduce storm debris generated by hurricanes which may occur during the 2025 Hurricane season from June 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025, and for other purposes.

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

Resolution – Ad Valorem Tax Agreement (Chatham County): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution approving an Intergovernmental agreement and contract with Chatham County, Georgia, whereunder the Chatham County Tax Commissioner shall oversee and provide for the collection of Ad Valorem tax monies on behalf of the city.

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 – CG Baseball, LLC Agreement (Parks and Recreation Dept.): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution by Mayor and Council authorizing the execution to enter into a three-year lease agreement commencing October 1, 2025, with CG Baseball, LLC for the use of Diamond No. 6 at the City's Bazemore Ball Park for operation of a baseball academy and customary activities.

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

Resolution – Emergency Temporary Resurfacing Project (Telfair Road & Telfair Place East): The Clerk of Council read the heading of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to engage the City's on-call contractor, B & D Clearing, Inc., to perform temporary paving work not to exceed \$100,000 on Telfair Road and Telfair Place East to include milling the existing damaged road asphalt, replace it with a temporary paved road surface, and the clipping down of the road shoulders until full-depth road reclamation work can be performed.

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

Adjournment: Councilmember Tice made a motion to adjourn at approximately 6:14pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hall and passed without opposition.

*Transcribed & submitted by: The Clerk of Council
Accepted & approved by: The City Council on 10-6-25*