

Minutes of the
REGULAR MEETING
of the
CITY COUNCIL
LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA

August 14, 2025
6:00 p.m.

PRESIDING: Mayor David S. Bennett

PRESENT: Council Members Arch Willingham, Taylor Watson, Caroline Williams, Tony Towns, and Kevin Leckenby; City Attorney Bill Pickering; City Manager Kenny Lee; and Chief of Police and Fire Jason Lewis.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE: Mayor David Bennett called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 14, 2025, at City Hall, 1214 Lula Lake Road, Lookout Mountain, Georgia 30750. Mayor Bennett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Council Member Arch Willingham made a motion to approve the minutes of the Council's regular meeting of July 10, 2025. The motion was seconded by Council Member Taylor Watson and passed unanimously.

REAL ESTATE PURCHASE AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – TOWN CENTER PROPERTY – PROPOSED GROCERY STORE: City Attorney Bill Pickering reminded the Council that one proposal had been received in response to the City's last RFP for the development of the Town Center property and that he and Council Member Arch Willingham had been authorized to negotiate an agreement with the proposed developer. The development proposal is from MAKO Properties LLC which is owned by Mountain residents Mary Alice Brock Mitchell and Oliver Mitchell. The terms of a Real Estate Purchase and Development Agreement with MAKO Properties LLC have been agreed on, and Mr. Pickering has provided the proposed Agreement to the City Council for review. The Mitchells were present for today's meeting. Mary Alice Mitchell addressed the Council and described her plans to build a 5000 square foot grocery store on the Town Center property. Mr. Willingham complemented the Mitchells and noted that they were knowledgeable and had been very good to work with. Mr. Pickering offered to answer any questions regarding the proposed Development Agreement. Council Member Arch Willingham made a motion that the Council approve the Real Estate Purchase and Development Agreement with MAKO Properties, LLC in substantially the form provided by Mr. Pickering. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kevin Leckenby and passed unanimously. The Agreement as approved is filed with these minutes.

SPLOST UPDATE: Mayor Bennett reported that allocations of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) had been agreed upon by Walker County and the municipalities located within the county. The first 20% of SPLOST revenue will be provided to the cities for recreation programs. The remaining's SPLOST proceeds will be allocated between Walker County and the cities 74%/26%, with each city's share being based on population. Mayor

Bennett estimates that the City of Lookout Mountain will receive approximately \$2 million for recreation and a total of \$4 million for all projects over the six-year SPLOST period. Mayor Bennett noted that SPLOST benefits the City by allowing us to fund major projects that taxpayers would otherwise have to pay for. The SPLOST Intergovernmental Agreement will be ready for review and approval in the next few days. A special City Council meeting will be scheduled next week to approve the agreement.

CONTRACTOR NOISE ISSUES: Mayor Bennett suggested that the City consider the adoption of an ordinance to address the problem of noise from contractor and lawn service work and machinery in the early morning and evening. Council Member Tony Towns suggested that any ordinance should have an exception for emergency work. The Council discussed this matter and potential solutions at length, including limiting construction and lawn service work to particular hours of the day. Mr. Pickering stated that limitations of this type were currently in place in the City's Single-Family/Neighborhood Commercial District but not in other districts. The City also has a noise ordinance that places specific limitations on decibel levels of amplified sound and generally prohibits unreasonably loud and disturbing noises. After discussion, the Council decided to table this matter, consider the issue further, and discuss at next month's meeting.

MAINTENANCE OF UTILITY LINES: Mayor Bennett reported that inadequate maintenance of utility lines, primarily by telecommunications companies, had become a problem and that lines and wires were sometimes left dangling and unsecured. The Council discussed potential solutions, including civil penalties that could be imposed if the carriers failed to remedy a problem after receiving notice of the issue. The Council asked Mr. Pickering to consider how to address the problem, either by ordinance or in franchise agreements with the carriers. The Council will revisit this issue at next month's regular meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE – ARCH WILLINGHAM: No report.

FIRE AND POLICE UPDATE – TAYLOR WATSON: Council Member Taylor Watson reported that the Police and Fire Department, under Chief Lewis' leadership, was continuing to work on officer compensation and scheduling. Mr. Pickering stated that Chief Lewis had sent him an updated compensation and scheduling proposal last week and that he would be reviewing the proposal and getting back to the Chief to finalize the proposal. Ms. Watson reported that the Department had hired two new officers and that one officer had left to work for the Lafayette Police Department. The officers enjoyed participating in the recent "Christmas in July" celebration. Ms. Watson again reminded residents to lock their cars and the doors at their residences.

FAIRYLAND SCHOOL UPDATE – CAROLINE WILLIAMS – Council Member Caroline Williams reported that Music on the Mountain would take place on August 23. Tickets are now on sale and may be purchased online. This is a great event and is Fairyland Elementary's biggest fundraiser.

STORMWATER COMMITTEE – TONY TOWNS: No report.

PUBLIC WORKS – KEVIN LECKENBY: Council Member Kevin Leckenby presented the monthly Public Works report. Mr. Leckenby's detailed written report is filed with these minutes. Mr. Leckenby commended G&P Masonry for their excellent work on the Hardy Road Archways Project.

CITY MANAGER – KENNY LEE: City Manager Kenny Lee reported that street striping will be done in September. The Cinderella Road park will be sodded in the fall once staff is available to do the work. There will be CPR training provided at City Hall next winter (January 17 and February 7, 2026). Up to 50 slots are available for the class. The cost is \$50 per person for training with testing for certification and \$25 per person for a refresher course only, without testing.

Mr. Lee reported on a recent sewer billing issue with Caselle. After a thorough review, Mr. Lee and Ashly Mann have decided that the Caselle system's portal does not currently meet the City's operational needs. The City has decided to pause implementation and to continue using Xpress Bill Pay. Mr. Lee complimented Ms. Mann on her handling of the situation.

The last phase of the gas line remediation will begin next month and is expected to be a time-consuming project.

SEWER ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE – PUMP STATION REPAIRS – WES HASDEN: Mr. Hasden reported that the pre-bid conference for the pump station project was held today, and there was good attendance. Sealed bids are being accepted and will be opened three weeks from today, on September 4, 2025.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Bennett reminded the Council and residents that qualifying for the City's 2025 Municipal Election will begin on Monday, August 18, 2025, at 8:30 AM, and will end on Friday, August 22, 2025, at 4:00 PM. Candidates for Mayor and three City Council seats must file their Notice of Candidacy, Affidavit, and qualifying fee at City Hall during the qualifying period. Candidates must also submit the Nomination Petition required by the City Charter. The Municipal Election will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Roberts
City Clerk