

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

February 12, 2026  
6:00 p.m.

**PRESIDING:** Mayor Arch Willingham

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

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE:** Mayor Arch Willingham called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at City Hall, 1214 Lula Lake Road, Lookout Mountain, Georgia 30750. City Attorney Bill Pickering led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONTRACT FOR COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT TAXES – APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN SERVICES:** City Attorney Bill Pickering presented an updated contract with Appalachian Mountain Services for the Collection of Delinquent Ad Valorem Taxes (included in the Council's meeting packet). The City has used Appalachian Mountain Services for tax collections for a number of years. City Manager Kenny Lee and City Clerk Cindy Roberts have been pleased with Appalachian Mountain Services and have recommended renewing the City's contract with them. Council Member Tony Towns made a motion to approve the renewed contract with Appalachian Mountain Services for the Collection of Delinquent Ad Valorem Taxes. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kevin Leckenby and passed unanimously.

**STATUS UPDATE - TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT:** Mayor Willingham noted that as a general contractor, he had been shocked to see how much construction costs have increased in the South. Last year, the City was thrilled to announce that Mary Alice Brock Mitchell and Oliver Mitchell (doing business as MAKO Properties, LLC) had entered into a Real Estate Purchase and Development Agreement with the City for the development of a grocery store on the City's Town Center property. The Mitchells invested substantially in architectural and engineering work for the proposed grocery store. But final cost estimates received in December showed that the project was not financially viable, and the Mitchells requested termination of their Development Agreement with the City. Because of the costs the Mitchells incurred, Mayor Willingham recommended that as part of the termination, the City refund half the \$25,000 deposit that the Mitchells provided when the agreement was signed. City Attorney Bill Pickering recommended that he and Mayor Willingham be authorized to negotiate a mutual termination agreement with MAKO Properties, LLC, and the Mitchells that would include a refund of half the \$25,000 deposit and other appropriate provisions. Council Member Kevin Leckenby made a motion to approve the termination of the Real Estate Purchase and Development Agreement on the terms stated and the execution of a termination agreement. The

motion was seconded by Council Member Taylor Watson and passed unanimously. Mayor Willingham expressed appreciation for the Mitchells' extensive efforts in pursuing the project.

**PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE – ARCH WILLINGHAM:** Mayor Willingham reported that the Municipal Planning Commission had a long discussion about a fence on Scenic Highway that had been constructed at six feet in height despite approval for five feet. The owners' request to keep the fence at six feet was denied. A separate request for a 48-inch fence on a corner lot was also denied. Ethan Calhoun of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan, which will be finalized once the new zoning ordinance is complete.

**POLICE AND FIRE UPDATE – TAYLOR WATSON:** Council Member Taylor Watson provided the monthly police and fire update. Chief Lewis has expressed concerns about officer retention due to regional pay increases and recommended implementing a 25¢ per hour longevity pay increase for officers at 1½, 3, and 5 years of service, with reevaluation thereafter. Council Member Tony Towns made a motion to approve the longevity pay increases as recommended. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kevin Leckenby and passed unanimously. Chief Lewis informed the Council that he attended the North Georgia Chiefs Association Convention on January 27. Chief Lewis also reported that he coordinated with emergency meteorological agencies during recent severe weather events. A second CPR class was held on February 7, with another planned for the spring. An RFP for ambulance service has been issued with responses due March 30. ISO reporting is progressing well, with completion expected by June, and Georgia Fire Standards and Training certification is anticipated in March or April. The City continues to evaluate crosswalk lighting options, including above-ground illuminated pylons used by Walker County Schools. Officers continue daily walk-throughs at Fairyland Elementary School, and a good photo of Officer Mike Blevins interacting with students will be submitted to the Mountain Mirror.

**GARDENS UPDATE – KENNY LEE:** City Manager Kenny Lee noted that the Connectivity Plan is nearing completion and is currently in quality control review with Ragan Smith. He recognized the late Jimmy Campbell for his contributions.

**FAIRYLAND SCHOOL UPDATE – TONY TOWNS –** Council Member Tony Towns reported that CCRPI and Governor's Office of Student Achievement results have been posted, and staff have completed narrative and dyslexia screening assessments. Mr. Towns reported on recent events, including the annual art show and "Pastries with Parents." Winter Break is coming up. Mr. Towns advised that the potential 4-day week had not been approved and that next year's weekly schedule will remain unchanged. Pre-K applications open on March 3; kindergarten applications will be available on the county website. Upcoming events include Jump Rope for Heart on February 20 and "Donuts with a Grown-Up" on February 11 for all grade levels.

**STORMWATER COMMITTEE – TONY TOWNS AND CAROLINE WILLIAMS:** Council Member Tony Towns reported that the committee had not met during the last month.

**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. City Manager Kenny Lee provided an update on the one-way signage for Wendy Trail.

**CITY MANAGER – KENNY LEE:** City Manager Kenny Lee noted that several properties remain significantly overgrown and that while condemnation is not applicable, ordinance violations may be cited to municipal court. Gas line remediation continues, with the next phase occurring between Rainbow and Wood Nymph. The Municipal Planning Commission's public hearing on Rock City's request for zoning amendments is scheduled for February 24 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, with a large turnout expected. City residents will receive priority to speak. Tennessee American Water Company is conducting a federally mandated inventory of service line materials, and residents will receive a communication regarding identification of their service lines.

**SEWER ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE – PUMP STATION REPAIRS – WES HASDEN:** Mr. Hasden reported that the pump station remediation project was progressing as planned. A change order for an access drive to the pump station has been approved.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Willingham stated that the annual budget process will begin in March, and a budget workshop will be scheduled with all Council members invited. The Mayor advised that the City is moving toward becoming a local issuing authority under the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, and he thanked those assisting with the transition. The Mayor thanked Kenny Lee and Chief Lewis for their work during the winter storm and congratulated Council Member Jay Brooks on the birth of his daughter, Caroline.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Roberts  
City Clerk