

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 6, 2025
9:30 AM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular work session on Thursday, February 6, 2025. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, Clinton Holland, and Frank Destadio.

Public Comment

Jackie DiPietre said her kids were involved in local swimming programs and urged Council to follow through with building the aquatics center recommended in the Recreation Master Plan. Her reasons included the age and poor condition of the Kedron Aquatics Center. She pointed out the survey showed that Peachtree City residents wanted a center that could host swim meets.

Mary Plant, a three-time Olympic gold medalist, continued the request, noting that swimming was a lifelong sport and open to people with disabilities. She also stated that an aquatics center should bring in enough income to pay for itself.

Darren Polish presented a bag of litter that he said he picked up in just a few minutes of walking along Spear Road. Polish noted that litter was prevalent along the roads throughout the city and urged Council to do something to bring awareness to the problem.

Keith Larson mentioned the six major projects listed in the Recreation Master Plan, noting that funding was finite. He urged Council to make the restrooms at Battery Way a priority, saying they would be used by many who walked, ran or rode in that area.

Quarterly Reports

A. 4th Quarter 2024

Council said they appreciated the quarterly reports.

The Mayor noted the pedestrian beacon on Peachtree Parkway North was now operating. Also, she stated, they were planning renovations at City Hall this summer that could result in having to vacate the building for a while.

Work Session Discussion Items

A. 2024 Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Safety Grant and Liability Management Grant

Michael McPherson of the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) presented Learnard with a plaque in recognition of her completion of the Mayors Leadership Academy.

He then presented Peachtree City with a \$20,000 safety grant check, which he explained was a function of Peachtree City being a member of the Workers' Comp program and the Risk Management program and earning \$10,000 in grant money for each program. The money was typically used for safety equipment for employees. Director of Human Resources and Risk Management Dr. Teaa Allston-Bing expressed appreciation to Dia Ladee of the HR Department for her work on this.

B. Feasibility Study for Connection of McIntosh High and Booth Middle via Path System

A bridge or tunnel across SR 54 to the McIntosh High area had been topic of discussion for many years, said Dan Davis of Integrated Science and Engineering, and Learnard noted that \$4 million for a split-grade crossing was allocated in the 2023 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

Davis presented Council with drawings of possible locations and laid them out on the table for discussion and a depiction of the options was posted on the screen for all to see. Davis and Council looked at four sites, and Davis said it had pretty much been narrowed down to two, with one appearing to be the best choice because it had a good connection to the path leading to the high school. A tunnel was pretty much out of the equation due to topography.

Davis told Council he wanted to continue working on the plan with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and should have some answers from them within a few weeks. Then, he wanted to move both of the top options to the 30% design stage, if Council approved. That should take several months more. Council agreed that was the best way to move forward.

Johnson asked about Robinson Road, mentioning the back-up when cars were trying to turn left onto SR 54. Davis said a high intensity signal (HAWK) would be needed at some point.

C. Renew "Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Return Program" (TNVR) with Fayette Humane Society

Marcia Hendershot, Director of the Fayette Humane Society's Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release (TNVR) program for cats, explained how the program worked and the number of cats it had helped since starting in 2020. She asked Council to renew the TNVR contract and expand it to cover all City-owned properties, not just the three listed in the contract that had expired December 31.

Strickland said the new contract would cover all City properties and have indefinite renewals. Brown requested the TNVR program be highlighted on the City's website and social media. Holland asked Hendershot how this program was funded, and she replied it was mostly through grants and fundraising events.

D. Renew Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) contract

GIS Manager Madhuri Adapala stated that many City departments relied on the Esri GIS software, and Council would be asked to renew the contract for three years at their next regular meeting. The cost was \$42,200 a year for a total of \$126,600, with the first year's cost was included in the 2025 budget. Subsequent costs would have to be budgeted.

E. 2025 Municipal Elections IGA

City Clerk Yasmin Julio recalled that Council approved a resolution for the November 4, 2025, municipal election for the Mayor's post and two Council seats in January. Approving this intergovernmental agreement (IGA) would allow the Fayette County Board of Elections to serve as the Elections Superintendent and Absentee Ballot Clerk.

F. Public Safety Answering Point Feasibility Study

Police Chief Janet Moon explained that the 2017 Fayette County SPLOST included an 800 megahertz radio system to provide reliable radio service to all county users. An IGA to provide service went into effect in 2011 and automatically renewed for a 10-year period in 2021. Fayette County entered into a contract with E.F. Johnson in 2018. As of May 2024, Moon continued, E.F. Johnson had yet to present a completed radio system for the county's acceptance.

Moon said numerous performance issues persisted in regard to audio quality, reliability, consistency, and the capacity of the system. E.F. Johnson had given an approximate lead time of 18 months to two years for completion, but now, almost seven years later, the system still was not complete.

Moon said a letter from the municipal government users, signed by the Tyrone Police Chief, the Fayetteville Police, Fire Chief Murphy and herself, was presented to the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners in May 2024. It stated that they had no confidence in the radio system and outlined concerns. The technology did not support emergency radio communications, resulting in responders being cut off, unable to transmit, and having distorted transmissions, creating a life safety issue, Moon stated. Several agencies had turned to using alternative communications systems due to lack of confidence in the E.F. Johnson technology.

Issues included signal outages, busy signals, problems with communications inside big box structures, volume inconsistencies, and difficulties with reception at fire stations. Moon reported that this had weakened trust in the communication system among personnel. In a critical event, the most important thing first responders needed was a reliable way to communicate with 911.

Destadio clarified that this had been going on for seven years, and Moon said that was correct, adding that one of the more frustrating things was the lack of urgency on E.F. Johnson's part to rectify the problems.

Murphy said he and Moon had worked with the City Manager's office to budget for their own public safety answering point. Seven companies submitted proposals and were evaluated based on experience, project approach, and completed price. Murphy said there was a clear winner, and the name and the amount would come to Council at its next meeting. The purpose of hiring this firm would be to evaluate if Peachtree City should remain with Fayette County and get this fixed or start their own system. Another option would be to form a regional system with several jurisdictions.

Holland reflected that citizens paid for these communications services, and he looked forward to seeing what good could come out of this.

G. Purchase of radios for Police SRO vehicles

Moon said Council would be asked at its next meeting to authorize the purchase of six in-car radio units from Radio One. These would be used in new patrol vehicles for the School Resource Officers at elementary schools. The cost, with installation, was \$47,996.28, which would be reimbursed by the Fayette County Board of Education. Holland clarified that the officers also had radios to carry with them inside the schools.

H. Consider RFP for ADA Consultant

City Engineer Dave Borkowski said the next meeting's agenda would include a request for Council to approve the hiring of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) consultant to help with the transition plan required as they assessed accessibility on all City-owned properties and formulated a plan to bring them into compliance. He said this consultant would assess all City buildings and recreation facilities.

They put out an RFP and received four proposals. After interviewing the two top candidates, Borkowski said Accessibility Consulting Partners, Inc. (ACP) was the best choice. The cost would be \$69,759, which was not budgeted but could come from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds left in Capital Improvement Program (CIP) contingency fund, Borkowski remarked.

Destadio asked what they would get from this. A ton of data, Borkowski replied, including a GIS database, a pdf report that ranked the assessed items with costs, and an Excel spreadsheet with which staff could interact. Who was doing this now? Destadio asked, and Borkowski said no one had looked at buildings and recreation facilities. Staff had assessed curb ramps on streets, and another vendor had assessed the paths.

Holland confirmed this was only for City property, and also that roads would be separate. Borkowski said everything would eventually be combined into a big master plan. Holland asked if there was deadline to complete the ADA compliance, and Borkowski said GDOT was working with them on a timeframe. It would be a long process, but they would be okay as long as they showed progress.

I. Discussion of Project Management for the Fire Station 85 Construction Project

They were now at the point in the construction process on Fire Station 85 where the construction bidding process could begin, Strickland stated. The floor plan that would be used was originally designed for Station 86, which had not yet been funded, and would be used for all future stations.

He displayed the site plan, saying they planned to grade the land next door to the building in case there was a need for a building there in the future. Strickland outlined the path that would connect this station to the network.

Now, Strickland proposed, they needed to bring in an outside project management firm. The City did not regularly do commercial projects and had no one on staff to manage this. He said he would be asking authorization to get quotes from project management firms and bring a recommendation back to Council.

Strickland displayed the floor plan, pointing out the bays for the trucks, the kitchen, the bunkroom, spaces for washers and dryers, and office space. He said Murphy and some of his staff had attended conferences on how to design and build a fire station.

Destadio expressed surprise that there was not already a project manager on staff. Strickland said these types of projects had not been frequent enough in the past to justify hiring someone for new construction. With the Recreation Master Plan and some other projects on tap, perhaps they might want to look into this.

Strickland said they could talk about that at budget time, but he would proceed to look at project management firms for this building. He proposed a timeline of contracting with a project manager, getting bids out and hiring a construction company. Council would award the final bid for construction, then the project manager would work with the construction company.

New Agenda Items

A. 02-25-01 114 Braelinn Court Emergency Pipe Replacement

Borkowski reminded Council that he had previously brought two emergency situations to their attention. At 114 Braelinn Court, a pipe near the foundation of a home needed to be replaced. They requested bids from Crawford Grading and Pipeline Inc. and McElroy McLeroy Inc., but received just one bid, \$45,624, from Crawford Grading. Borkowski said they requested bids from these two firms because they were the only two, out of the four companies contacted, to respond to the other request. The money was available through the stormwater utility fund.

Holland moved to approve the 114 Braelinn Court pipe replacement project and award the bid to Crawford Grading and Pipeline, Inc. for \$45,624. Brown seconded.

Destadio asked if this was a total replacement, and Borkowski said that was necessary due to the condition of the pipe.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. 02-25-02 37 Parkgate Emergency Pipe Replacement

Borkowski moved on to 37 Parkgate, explaining that the pipe under the dam was in need of replacement. They sought bids from four companies; two responded, with Crawford Grading and Pipeline being the lowest at \$313,140.

Holland moved to approve the 37 Parkgate pond outlet pipe replacement project and award the bid to Crawford Grading and Pipeline, Inc. for \$313,140. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 02-25-03 Budget Amendment – FY2024 – Hotel Motel and Cert Grant

Accounting Manager Dustin Farron explained that the Hotel/Motel Fund received \$27,500 more collections than anticipated in fiscal year 2024, which created an over budget situation. He asked Council to approve a pass through to the General Fund for \$10,300, the Tourism Product and Development Fund, \$5,200, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, \$12,000.

Brown moved to approve budget amendment 24-30 for additional Hotel Motel collection. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 02-25-04 Sponsorship Acceptance and FY25 Budget Amendment

Farron said Mahaffey and Linkous Orthodontics had donated \$1,000 for the Father/Daughter Dance.

Brown moved to accept the donation. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously

Council/Staff Topics

1. Slice of the City

The Mayor stated that the first Slice of the City program was set for February 26 in Kedron Village.

2. Transportation Advisory Group Applications

The Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) had three openings and applications were being accepted, Learnard stated.

3. PTC101

Applications were being taken for the PTC 101 program. Strickland said there had been about 50 applications already.

4. Senior Homestead Exemptions

Brown wanted information about the expanded senior citizen tax exemption highlighted

on the website and social media.

5. Litter Pick-Up Campaign

Referring to the citizen's complaint earlier in the meeting, Brown acknowledged that litter was a growing problem. She suggested the Communications team create a short video aimed at parents and children.

Holland said the Knights of Columbus picked up litter along a portion of Peachtree Parkway North and pointed out that residents could earn credit on their stormwater bill by picking up litter. Strickland said he liked the idea of a promotional campaign with videos. It should be more effective than signs. He also mentioned the anti-littering programs run by Keep Peachtree City Beautiful.

6. Introduction of Shayla Reed, Planning & Development Director

Strickland introduced new Planning and Zoning Director Shayla Reed.

Executive Session

Holland moved to adjourn to executive session at 11:25 a.m. to discuss cybersecurity plans and procedures. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Destadio moved to reconvene in regular session at 11:49 a.m. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Legislative zoning decisions and meeting or discussions with applicant.

NO ACTION REQUIRED

Adjourn

There being no further business, Holland moved to adjourn the meeting. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor