

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 10, 2025
9:30 AM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in special called session on Thursday, July 10, 2025. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, and Clinton Holland.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Presentation

A. Presentation of 4th of July Parade Winners

The Spirit of Peachtree City 2025: "Captain O'Brien and the Peachtree City Pirates

Most Patriotic: Salon 54

Most Creative: Friends of Flat Creek Floyd

Mayor's Trophy: McDaddy & Son

Grand Marshal Trophy: Peachtree City Running Club

The Mayor commented that this was the best Fourth of July celebration she had witnessed in her 26 years in the city and expressed her thanks to staff for organizing the parade and fireworks. She presented trophies to the parade award winners.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

A. Life-Saving Award Recognition

Life-Saving Awards were presented to Fire Station 83 A-shift crew for their heroic and life-saving actions during a residential structure fire on April 7. Those honored were Lt. Robert Hardaway, Firefighter/Paramedic Jennifer Griffin, AEMT Angela Nantakul, Firefighter/EMT Jason Boswell, and Firefighter/AEMT Bryan Mckenzie.

Public Comment

Darrell Baker said he grew up in Fayette County and now worked for Randolph-Williams. He had some comments regarding frustration with the City as he worked with five businesses that wanted to relocate to Peachtree City, although he expressed satisfaction with the staff members with whom he had met. He ran out of time but said he would submit his comments to Council.

Keith Larson reported that People4Bikes had rated Peachtree City #2 in the state in enabling cyclists to travel through their communities in a stress-free manner. He attributed this to the community's emphasis on bike-friendly projects and connectivity.

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

A. June 19, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes

Holland moved to approve the June 19, 2025, City Council meeting minutes. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

None

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

A. 07-25-01 PD Security Trailer

Police Chief Janet Moon asked for approval of project 15 of the 2023 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), a solar-powered mobile security trailer. She said staff had conducted a comprehensive review of manufacturers and models and decided Verkada Security Cameras best met the department's needs and budget. She explained that Verkada did not sell directly to customers but partnered with Alscan, Inc., an Atlanta-based company, for system configuration and delivery. The cost would be \$44,684.60.

Johnson moved to approve Alscan, Inc. as a brand name vendor and approve the purchase of a solar-powered mobile security trailer for \$44,684.60. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 07-25-02 Resolution Supporting Amicus Brief in Chang v Milton Certiorari Appeal

City Attorney Ted Meeker asked Council to allow him to sign off on an amicus brief on a case in the city of Milton that involved a collision with a planter in a right-of-way. A driver was killed and a judgement found against Milton for \$35 million.

Meeker said this judgement went against established law, and, if it stood, would change what could be allowed in a right-of-way. The Georgia Supreme Court had agreed to hear an appeal.

Holland moved to adopt the resolution as presented. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 07-25-03 Architectural and Construction Management Services RFP

City Engineer Dave Borkowski asked Council to award a contract for architectural and construction management services to Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC). There were eight responses to the request for proposals (RFPs) sent out by staff, and they narrowed it down to three contenders, with GMC being the unanimous finalist. The upcoming construction on Fire Station 85 was what triggered this, but other projects would be assigned on an as-needed basis, Borkowski said, and a fee would be negotiated for each task following the normal approval process.

Holland asked if the City had worked with GMC before, and Borkowski said they had not.

Holland moved to award the contract for architectural and construction management services to Goodwyn Mills Cawood. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 07-25-04 Kedron Bridge Guardrail Replacement

This guardrail was damaged by a motor vehicle, and Borkowski said they were asking Council to award the contract for replacement to Piedmont Paving, the low bidder, in the amount of \$139,668.72.

The Mayor asked if insurance would cover that, and Meeker said that it would be discussed in executive session. Brown wondered about the extreme difference in the amounts of the two bids, and Borkowski said some of the unit prices were higher and overhead might call for higher prices.

Brown moved to approve New Agenda item 07-25-04 Kedron Bridge Guardrail Replacement and award the contract to Piedmont Paving in the amount of \$139,668.72. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

E. 07-25-05 FY2025 Budget Amendment and Acceptance of Donations toward Greenspace Trail Improvements

Public Works Director Jonathan Miller said the Southside Cycling Club wanted to donate \$2,000 for a bike repair stand, along with an in-kind donation of materials with volunteer installation of natural surface trail maintenance and improvements at the Peachtree City Athletic Complex (PAC Trails) and Gin Branch Greenspace. The upgrades would include information kiosks and trail markings.

Johnson moved to approve New Agenda item 07-25-05 FY2025 budget amendment and acceptance of donations toward greenspace trail improvement. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

A. 07-25-06 Annual Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance Adoption

Meeker said this was basically a housekeeping/best practices item. He thought it was best for them to have a fixed period of time, in this case annually, to advertise and re-adopt the official zoning map and zoning ordinance. This reflected all map amendments adopted during calendar year 2024. No additional map or text changes were included.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and she closed the public hearing.

Holland moved to approve the annual re-adoption of the official zoning map and zoning ordinance. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 07-25-07 New Alcohol License - Singh's Cafe Indian Cuisine, 1009 N. Peachtree Parkway

Deputy City Clerk Stacey Collins said this was in the Kedron Village Shopping Center. The location and the applicant both met all requirements to hold an alcohol license.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and she closed the public hearing.

Brown moved to approve agenda item 07-25-07, new alcohol license - Singh's Cafe Indian Cuisine, 1009 N. Peachtree Parkway. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 07-25-08 FY26 Manager's Proposed Budget

City Manager Justin Strickland said that since the first budget presentation on June 5, he had talked with the Mayor and the three Councilmembers, and these talks resulted in a few changes.

He began by going over the City's vision and values statement, and the strategic pillars. These helped set the priorities for the budget. The budget policy called for maintaining existing services, with no new expenses, unless they were balanced by cuts or new revenue. The fiscal year 2026 proposed budget predicted revenues and appropriations of \$58,406,380, which called for no use of the reserve fund. The original budget for FY 2025 had called for using about \$70,000 of reserves, but now they were projecting to add about \$750,000 to the reserve fund. However, Strickland said they were looking at some expenses near the end of the fiscal year that could drive that number down. He showed a 13-year history of the City's millage rate, which had dropped from 7.178 in 2012 to the current 5.983.

A big concern with this year's budget, Strickland related, was the impact of House Bill 581, which kept the taxable assessed value for qualifying homeowners fixed at the FY 25 rate for this year and would tie it to the rate of inflation in the future.

A pie chart showed that 44% of revenues came from property taxes, 22% from the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), and the remainder from other taxes, such as occupational tax, franchise taxes, fines and forfeitures, franchise fees, charges for services, and licenses and permits.

Expenses included a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for City employees, three new firefighter positions, three Police reclassifications, increases in utility costs, ongoing competition for labor, and an increase in vehicle costs. Fuel costs were expected to continue to decline, and technology costs were holding steady with just a 2% increase for FY 26. Labor costs were still climbing, however. Changes from what was presented in June included one new equipment operator for Public Works and new part-time Code Enforcement officers in order to expand park and path patrols throughout the city.

Another chart broke down the General Fund expenditures in the budget, showing

that about half of the municipal taxes went to Public Safety. Police, Fire, Public Works, and Recreation made up the “big four” divisions that consumed 70% of the budget. The remaining 30%, outside of the library, were support services such as Finance and Human Resources. Approximately 63% of the expenditures went to salaries, with 23% going to other personnel costs, and 19% to contractual services.

A graph showed Peachtree City’s COLA history and that it lagged slightly behind the national consumer price index (CPI), although the City had taken measures to remain competitive. Strickland said this would be an ongoing issue. He also explained that Peachtree City was within the recommended ratio of City employees to population and noted that the population had increased by about 14% over just the past five years, which was a little higher than the growth rate for the previous 20 years.

Strickland reviewed the changes proposed since the June 5 meeting. These included a reduction in salaries by \$642,069 to offset the new expenses, which included adding a fire tower to the capital project plan for \$387,000, something he said the Fire Department had requested for years to bolster its training program and help maintain its top ISO rating. The new equipment operator position for Public Works would cost \$95,500, and the additional hours for the part-time Code Enforcement salaries would be \$80,000, plus \$30,000 for the two golf carts they would need.

No major operational changes were proposed for Storm Water Utility Fund. The budget included \$600,000 for renewal and extension projects, which required drawing about \$200,000 from reserves. They were currently conducting a storm water rate study, which had not been done since 2013. Strickland said the Amphitheater was completely supported by revenues, mostly from events, plus hotel/motel taxes. The proposed budget for FY 2026 was \$1.97 million. Profits were reinvested into the facility.

The hotel/motel tax fund’s projected revenue was \$2.1 million. Money was distributed to other funds, with 3% going to the General Fund, 3.5% to the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), 1.5% to Tourism and Product Development (TPD), plus \$75,000 to the Amphitheater Fund. These percentages were determined by State law.

The Capital Projects Fund reflected the budget’s changes, with the fire tower being an addition since June. It totaled \$1.8 million, with projects including facilities improvements, Public Works and Recreation equipment, Police vehicle replacements, and technology replacements and software.

Strickland showed a graph that illustrated the distribution on vehicles among City departments, with Police getting 48% of the total. Another chart showed how the staggered replacement system for vehicles was spread out over the years.

All American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects were completed or under contract, he stated. Those included Tennis Center renovations, LED lighting at the athletic fields, and City Hall renovations. The total for these projects was about \$6.7 million. Strickland also showed how the \$4.1 million the City held in impact fees from new development was divided, with \$3.9 million going to new paths, and \$258,000 to the Fire Department. The Police Department's share had been used to purchase the gun range.

Financial Services Director Kelly Bush presented the five-year financial model, saying there would be a few slight changes. They would start out with a fund balance of \$34 million and were not proposing to add to that, so the year should end with a fund balance of 59%, which was about seven months of expenditures. The model projected a 3% growth each year through 2031, but for the next year she built in debt service on a facilities authority bond which was a possibility for financing some larger capital projects. Strickland said that could be moved up to the current fiscal year, if Council decided to move ahead and there were projects ready to go.

Strickland said he always liked to explain that while Peachtree City had the highest municipal tax rate in the County, that number was misleading because other jurisdictions did not provide the same level of services as Peachtree City did, such as emergency medical services (EMS). Tyrone relied on the County for fire services. Once the County millage rate was added, with those additional charges, the total millage rates for Tyrone and Fayetteville actually were higher than Peachtree City's. Once school taxes were added, there was very little difference between the millage rates for all municipalities plus the unincorporated County.

It cost \$40.97 more a month to live in Peachtree City than in the County or in Woolsey, Strickland said, and for that amount, Peachtree City residents got a Fire Department with an ISO 1 rating and premier EMS, parks, year-round swimming, a top-notch library, 100-plus miles of paths, and a nationally-certified Police Department.

He again mentioned that their job was to take care of the City's assets, noting there were 87 City buildings, more than 1,000 vehicles, including equipment, about 5,000 traffic signs, 95 miles of storm water pipe, more than 40 parks, fields, and recreation areas, among other things. In all, the City owned about 16% of the total land within its boundaries, Strickland pointed out.

He concluded with a list of items that would keep Peachtree City on the path to excellence including keeping employee pay at the 85th percentile, pursuing 2023 SPLOST projects, keeping ordinances updated, utilizing new citizen advisory groups, and not sacrificing services.

Council would be asked to adopt the budget on August 21, Strickland reported, and

he hoped the County tax digest would be ready by then and they could adopt the millage rate as well. Also on the August 21 agenda would be the CVB and Keep Peachtree City Beautiful budgets.

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

Paul Schultz thanked Strickland for putting together a comprehensive and transparent budget presentation. He noted that it was interesting to observe that most of the tax money went to pay for Public Safety and Public Works, and those were the most valuable things the City did. He felt the employee head count was reasonable.

Schultz said he was glad to see the City pursuing grants, but he was concerned about taking on debt with a facilities bond. He wondered, too, about ongoing pension funds obligations. He said he initially thought the reserve fund should be bled down but had reconsidered and felt the City should maintain the fund for future needs in uncertain times. He thanked Strickland for recognizing the citizen advisory groups.

Keith Larson complimented staff for doing a thorough job. He wanted to point out that there were no hidden projects that suddenly appeared in the budget, as some citizens claimed. He noted that he saw a City that set goals and worked towards achieving them. Larson also noted that there were some things that had been neglected for years, such as disability access and deferred maintenance, which were now being addressed. Path safety should also be a priority, and he was glad to see they were looking to put more people to monitor it.

No one else wished to speak, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Holland said he was glad to see the new Code Enforcement officers added to the paths and noted they could write citations. Brown echoed that, saying Code Enforcement would now be able to expand their patrol areas. Johnson agreed and asked Strickland what authority these officers would have.

Strickland noted that they could only enforce City ordinances which related to the path system, but they could not force people to stop as a Police officer could. They could write citations and warnings. He observed that many times, Code Enforcement provided help to people on the paths, such as with breakdowns or providing information on the rules of the paths. Johnson noted they could communicate with Police as needed.

Council/Staff Topics

1. New CVB literature

The CVB had a new publication out, Learnard said, calling it "gorgeous." She commended the CVB for all their recent work, which included a new logo.

2. Feeding deer

Brown asked citizens not to feed the deer on their property, saying it encouraged them to approach people.

3. Archery Season

Brown also mentioned that archery season would start Sept. 14 and last through January to licensed hunters.

4. 4th of July staff acknowledgment

Johnson thanked staff for their work on the July 4 parade and fireworks.

5. Budget and quality of life in Peachtree City

Holland noted that it was indeed a bargain to live in Peachtree City and partake of the services provided.

6. Home Run Derby Night at Drake Field on Monday, July 14th at 6 PM

Assistant Recreation Director Harold Layton invited everyone to come out for food trucks, fun games, and the Derby on a big screen..

7. Compliments on facilities

Meeker said a friend of his who had visited the city for youth sports was highly complimentary of the facilities.

Executive Session

Brown moved to adjourn to executive session at 11:10 a.m. to discuss the sale, lease, or purchase of real estate and pending or threatened litigation. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to reconvene in regular session at 11:37 a.m. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to deny the claim by Dana Johnson as presented. Brown seconded. Motion carried 3-0-1(Johnson).

Holland moved to deny the claim by Brittney Richardson as presented. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to go back in executive session for threatened and/or pending litigation at 11:40 a.m. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

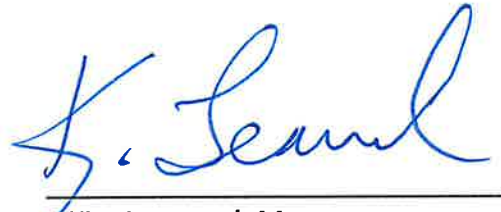
Holland moved to reconvene in regular session at 11:49 a.m. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor