

MINUTES
WORK SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF DOUGLAS, GEORGIA
APRIL 28, 2025

The Board of Commissioners held a work session on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:00 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Tony L. Paulk presided over the meeting with Mayor Pro Tem Cindy McNeill, Commissioners Edwin Taylor, Steve Bailey, Mike Gowen, Tony Paulk II, and Brenda Moore in attendance.

REVIEWED APRIL 14, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Charles Davis, City Manager, presented the first item, reviewing the meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners on April 14, 2025. Mayor Tony L. Paulk, I asked the Commissioners to propose any changes to ensure accurate historical record-keeping.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF ORDINANCE AND ZONING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND STRUCTURES

This item was removed from the agenda.

DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF AN ORDINANCE AND ZONING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CRYPTOCURRENCY MINING AND DATA CENTERS, EQUIPMENT, AND STRUCTURES

This item was removed from the agenda.

DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BROADBAND COMMUNITY

Georgia Henderson, the Assistant City Manager, addressed the Commission to present a proposed ordinance establishing formal requirements and standards for broadband infrastructure within the City of Douglas.

Mrs. Henderson explained that the City of Douglas aims to support economic development, educational opportunities, and access to essential services through this new ordinance. It is designed to establish standards and requirements for broadband infrastructure within the city limits. This initiative aligns with state and federal efforts to expand high-speed internet access in underserved and rural communities. Broadband-read communities recognize that the Internet is a vital infrastructure. They prioritize expansion, integrate broadband into their goals and strategies, and promote themselves as ready for expansion.

Additionally, Mrs. Henderson noted that the proposed ordinance seeks to ensure that broadband services are delivered efficiently, equitably, and with minimal disruption to existing infrastructure and public rights-of-way. It will specify expectations for service providers regarding the deployment of broadband networks, including permitting processes, technical specifications, maintenance responsibilities, and coordination with city departments.

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DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BROADBAND COMMUNITY (CONTINUE)

By formally adopting this ordinance, the City of Douglas aims to:

- Expand reliable, high-speed internet access for all residents and businesses.
- Establish clear guidelines for broadband providers to ensure safe, standardized, and cost-effective deployment.
- Support innovative city initiatives and promote digital inclusion.
- Protect and efficiently manage the city's infrastructure during broadband installations and upgrades.

This ordinance demonstrates the City's commitment to enhancing connectivity and future-proofing its digital infrastructure for all citizens.

The Commission has agreed to advance this item to the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH REGULATIONS FOR SHORT-TERM AND VACATION RENTALS

Georgia Henderson, Assistant City Manager, presented to the Commission the first reading of a proposed ordinance regulating short-term and vacation rentals within the City of Douglas.

Mrs. Henderson explained that the ordinance addresses the increasing number of properties used for short-term lodging through platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO, and similar services. By establishing a framework for licensing, inspections, and enforcement, the ordinance ensures that rental properties operate safely and responsibly. It aims to promote residents' and visitors' health, safety, and welfare by implementing minimum operational standards, occupancy limits, and other compliance measures.

Additionally, Mrs. Henderson highlighted that this ordinance would support the city's efforts to:

- Protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods
- Ensure that rental properties adhere to safety and zoning requirements
- Provide equitable treatment for traditional lodging establishments
- Establish a mechanism for addressing complaints and violations

The adoption of this ordinance demonstrates the city's commitment to managing short-term rentals in a manner that supports tourism and economic development while maintaining community standards and protecting residents' quality of life.

The Commission agreed to advance this item on the **Regular Agenda**.

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DISCUSSED AND APPROVED THE RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE THE CITY OF DOUGLAS AS A CITY OF CIVILITY

Georgia Henderson, Assistant City Manager, appeared before the Commission to formally request approval to adopt the Embrace Civility framework. This action demonstrates the City of Douglas's commitment to respectful governance and community engagement.

Mrs. Henderson explained that the proposed resolution reaffirms the City of Douglas's dedication to fostering a culture of civility in municipal governance. It aligns with the Georgia Municipal Association's Embrace Civility initiative, encouraging cities to model respectful and productive discourse, even in disagreement. Adopting this resolution, the city pledges to uphold principles promoting trust, transparency, and inclusive engagement among elected officials, staff, and residents. The resolution also outlines the "9 Pillars of Civility," which guide interactions within the community. This action positions the city to be recognized by the Georgia Municipal Association as a "City of Civility," joining over 120 municipalities that have embraced this initiative. Such recognition highlights the city's leadership in promoting a healthy, functional, and respectful society. Upon adoption, staff will submit the signed resolution to the Georgia Municipal Association to achieve the "City of Civility" designation.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED THE APPROVAL OF THE FY25 UTILITIES BUILDING SHELTER CONSTRUCTION BID, 66812-25-0020

Charlie Purcell, the Interim Director of the Electric Department, appeared before the Commission to seek approval from the Mayor and Board of Commissioners for expanding the Utilities Building Shelter at 100 Public Works Drive.

Mr. Purcell explained that the bid for this project was advertised on February 19, 2025. After reviewing the bids, he and the Purchasing Agent, Anthony Folsom, recommended awarding the contract to the lowest bidder, Carlton Dorminey from Ambrose, Georgia, with a total estimated cost of \$43,500.00.

FUNDING: FY25 510-4600-54.1303

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED THE CHANGE ORDER CONTRACT FOR AERATION AND FILTER REHAB PROJECT AT THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP)

Charles Davis, the City Manager, presented to the Commission a request for approval of a Change Order related to the Aeration and Filter Rehabilitation Project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The change order is for \$36,887.05, and he also requested a 90-day extension of the contract.

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DISCUSSED THE ADDITION OF AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH COTTAGE FOOD REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Georgia Henderson, the Assistant City Manager, presented and requested consideration of a proposed ordinance to establish Cottage Food Regulations and Requirements for the City. This ordinance is designed to align with the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Cottage Food Program standards, allowing residents in residential zoning districts to produce and sell non-potentially hazardous food items from their home kitchens. The goal is to support small business development, promote local entrepreneurship, and provide economic opportunities in the rural areas of Douglas, while maintaining public health and neighborhood integrity.

The ordinance outlines licensing requirements, zoning permissions, operational limitations, and compliance measures to ensure the safe and regulated growth of cottage food operations within the city. Approval of this ordinance will create a framework for secure, community-based food production and contribute to the city's ongoing efforts to encourage rural enterprise and self-sufficiency.

Mrs. Henderson stated that the Georgia Department of Agriculture regulates the Cottage Food Program, which allows individuals to produce specific non-potentially hazardous food items in their home kitchens for direct sale to consumers. The program supports small-scale, home-based food entrepreneurs while ensuring compliance with basic food safety and labeling standards. To expand economic development opportunities for residents, the City of Douglas seeks to adopt an ordinance that formally recognizes and regulates cottage food operations within the city limits. This action will align city policy with existing state regulations and provide clear guidance for operators and enforcement personnel. Cottage food products include loaf breads, rolls, biscuits, cakes, pastries, cookies, candies, confections, fruit pies, jams, jellies, preserves, dried fruits, dry herbs, seasonings and mixtures, cereals, trail mixes, granola, coated or uncoated nuts, vinegar, flavored vinegar, popcorn balls, and cotton candy.

Mrs. Henderson explained that this ordinance will establish the necessary framework for permitting home-based businesses, including adherence to Department of Agriculture licensing requirements, zoning compatibility, and operational guidelines. By adopting this ordinance, the City of Douglas aims to:

- Provide residents with a legal pathway to participate in the cottage food industry
- Promote self-employment and local entrepreneurship in a safe and manageable way
- Ensure that public health standards and neighborhood compatibility are maintained
- Encourage the responsible use of residential kitchens for small-scale commercial food production

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

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DISCUSSED THE CHANGE ORDER CONTRACT FOR AERATION AND FILTER REHAB PROJECT AT THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) (CONTINUE)

Mr. Davis reported that on August 14, 2023, the Mayor and Council approved a contract for improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) with Lakeshore Engineering, the lowest bidder, at \$8,582,500. The city initially planned to reuse some electrical disconnects; however, it became evident that they would not be compatible with the new equipment due to age and difficulty obtaining replacement parts. As a result, it is necessary to increase the contract value to cover the cost of 12 new electrical disconnects for the aerator equipment.

Additionally, a request is to extend the contract period by 90 days. This extension is needed due to weather-related delays, including Hurricane Helene, and delays from the manufacturer of the aeration equipment. FUNDING: 351-1000-54.1404

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED ELECTION OF GMA'S DISTRICT 11 OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026

Charles W. Davis, City Manager, appeared before the Commission to seek authorization for the mayor to sign the ballot for the General Municipal Association (GMA) District 11 2025-2026 Officers.

Mr. Davis explained that the city must authorize the mayor to sign the city's ballot for GMA District 11 officers each year. Attached is the official vote for the election of GMA District 11 Officers for the 2025-2026 term. The ballot includes the names of city officials nominated by the current district officers serving as the district nominating committee. Since no additional nominations were received by the April 11 deadline, the nominations are now closed. The completed ballot should be returned to Emily Davenport by Friday, May 23. Please note that only one vote can be submitted per city. Final approval of the GMA district officers, the association's officers, and the Board of Directors will take place at the annual business meeting on June 23.

The Commission agreed to advance this item on the **Consent Agenda**.

GENERAL COMMENTS (3 MINUTES)

No Comments

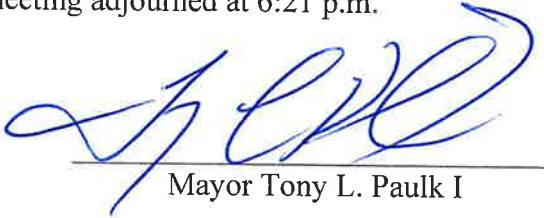
CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

No Comments

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ADJOURNMENT

Without further discussion, the work session meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.



Mayor Tony L. Paulk I



Wynetta J. Bolder, CMC

