



## **Cleveland City Council Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, January 05, 2026 at 6:30 PM**

**Oak Springs Community Center/Police Department – 342 Campbell Street, Cleveland, GA**

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **PRESENT:**

Mayor Josh Turner, Council Members Nan Bowen (Mayor Pro Tem), Annie Sutton, Jeremy McClure, and C.J. McDonald

Also, present were City Manager Kevin Harris, City Attorney Keith Whitaker, and City Clerk Lisa Ritchie

### **INVOCATION**

1. Pastor Burnetta Armour, First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, and White County Ministerial Alliance

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Council Member Bowen, seconded by Council Member McDonald, and voted, unanimously, to approve the agenda.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

2. America 250 Proclamation

Motion by Council Member Sutton, seconded by Council Member McClure, and voted, unanimously, to approve America 250 Proclamation.

Mayor Turner stated that the City of Cleveland is proud to announce the formation of the *Cleveland Celebrates America 250 Committee*, established by proclamation of the Mayor and City Council to lead the City's participation in the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026.

Mayor Turner noted that this once-in-a-generation celebration provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on America's history, honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, and inspire civic pride, unity, and engagement for future generations.

He announced that the Cleveland Celebrates America 250 Committee is chaired by the First Lady of Cleveland, Lacy Turner, with Councilmember Nan Bowen, Councilmember Annie Sutton, Mrs. Ansley McClure, and Mrs. Haley McDonald serving as Co-Chairs.

Mayor Turner further stated that the committee is supported by City Manager Kevin Harris, serving as Administrative Director and City point of contact; City Clerk Lisa Ritchie, serving as the committee's Secretary and official record keeper; and Finance Director John Solmon, serving as the committee's Treasurer.

He noted that together, this leadership team brings experience in public service, community engagement, education, public safety, faith leadership, and civic organizations.

Mayor Turner explained that the committee was intentionally designed to be broad, inclusive, and representative of the Cleveland and White County community. Membership includes city and county officials, public safety leaders, educators, historical experts, business and civic organization leaders, faith leaders representing many denominations and every church within the city limits, university representation, and community members.

He stated that this diverse structure ensures the America 250 celebration reflects a wide range of perspectives, voices, and traditions, honoring both the nation's shared history and the people who make up the community today.

To ensure effective planning and meaningful programming, Mayor Turner announced that the following subcommittees have been established:

- Fireworks Show Committee – Chaired by Interim Fire Chief Bo Medlock
- Entertainment Committee – Chaired by Alyssa Tyree
- Public Safety Committee – Chaired by Police Chief Jeff Shoemaker
- Public Relations and Communications Committee – Chaired by City Manager Kevin Harris
- Sponsorships Committee – Chaired by Finance Director John Solmon
- Education and History Committee – Co-Chaired by Assistant Superintendent of Schools Jonathan Stribling and Historical Society representative Garrison Baker
- "Run for Freedom" 5K Committee – Chaired by Carlos Santiago
- America Prays Committee – Chaired by Truett McConnell University Associate Vice President Danny Hendrix

Mayor Turner stated that additional subcommittees may be formed as needed to support new ideas, events, and community-led initiatives.

He concluded by noting that the Cleveland Celebrates America 250 Committee welcomes community involvement and encourages residents, students, businesses, churches, civic groups, and organizations to participate by volunteering, sponsoring events, serving on subcommittees, or contributing ideas and resources. He said America 250, is not only a celebration of the past but an opportunity for the community to come together to reflect, learn, serve, and envision a shared future.

Mayor Turner stated that additional information regarding meeting dates, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events will be shared as planning continues and on the City's website and social media platforms.

### 3. FY 2024 - FY 2025 Audit

Wayne Tuck of Walker, Pierce & Tuck, P.C. presented the audit.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the public.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

4. 2nd Public Hearing and Consideration - Resolution 2026-01 Amending the Compensation of Elected Officials to include the Definition of Meetings and Reimbursement Requirements

Mayor Turner opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Harris discussed the item.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Turner closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Council Member Bowen, seconded by Council Member McDonald, and voted, unanimously, to approve Resolution 2026-01 Amending the Compensation of Elected Officials to include the Definition of Meetings and Reimbursement Requirements.

5. Public Hearing for Comprehensive Plan Update submittal for review by Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC)

Mayor Turner opened the Public Hearing.

Economic Development and Planning Director Tom O'Bryant addressed the Mayor and Council Members for discussion regarding the item.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Turner closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Turner expressed appreciation to Mr. O'Bryant, the committee, and Ms. Hazel, for their efforts.

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member Sutton, and voted, unanimously, to approve the Comprehensive Plan Update submittal for review by Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC).

**NEW BUSINESS**

6. Resolution 2026-02 - Setting 2026 Annual Appointments

Mr. Harris discussed the item.

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member McClure, and voted, unanimously, to approve Resolution 2026-02 - Setting 2026 Annual Appointments.

7. Award the bid of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades to M.B. Kahn, EDA grant project ED24ATLOG0215 at \$27,981,100 for construction and upgrades of both treatment methods and capacity to the existing WWTP as recommended by consulting engineer, Meg Mbugua's (Rindt).

Mayor Turner introduced the item.

Ms. Mbugua addressed the Mayor and Council Members and stated that the bids had been reviewed and tabulated, with M.B. Kahn being the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member Sutton, and voted, unanimously, to approve the award of the bid for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades to M.B. Kahn, EDA grant project ED24ATLOG0215 at \$27,981,100 for construction and upgrades of both treatment methods and capacity to the existing WWTP as recommended by consulting engineer, Meg Mbugua's (Rindt).

Mayor Turner and Council Members expressed appreciation to staff, the community, partners, the White County Chamber of Commerce, etc. for all their efforts.

8. Approve FY2026 LMIG project proposal for submission to GDOT

Mr. O'Bryant addressed the Mayor and Council Members and discussed the item.

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member Sutton, and voted, unanimously, to approve the FY2026 LMIG project proposal for submission to GDOT.

## **CALLED MEETING/MEETING MINUTES**

### **9. December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Council Member Bowen, seconded by Council Member McDonald, and voted, unanimously, to approve December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

### **10. December 19, 2025 Called Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Council Member Bowen, seconded by Council Member McDonald, and voted, unanimously, to approve December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES**

### **11. December 1, 2025 Executive Session Minutes**

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member Bowen, and voted, unanimously, to approve December 1, 2025 Executive Session Minutes.

## **CITY ATTORNEY KEITH WHITAKER**

Mr. Whitaker did not have items to report.

## **CITY ADMINISTRATOR KEVIN HARRIS**

Mr. Harris discussed some of the achievements that were led by the Mayor and Council Members in one fiscal year, as follows:

- New Firetruck
- New Fire Station
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Appreciation to the Mayor and Council for their leadership

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Ritchie gave the announcements.

- 12.** The White County Water Authority Meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 7:30 a.m. at the White County Water Authority has been postponed to January 15.
- 13.** The Planning and Zoning Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Oak Springs Community Center/Police Department
- 14.** The Downtown Development Authority meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the White County Chamber of Commerce
- 15.** City of Cleveland offices will be closed on Monday, January 19, 2026, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 16.** The City Council Meeting scheduled for Monday, January 19, 2026, has been cancelled
- 17.** The next Cleveland City Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 2, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Oak Springs Community Center/Police Department.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member McDonald and voted, to enter an Executive Session at 7:18 p.m.

Mayor Turner informed those present that action was likely to occur following the Executive Session.

### **18. Discussion Regarding Real Estate**

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member Sutton and voted, unanimously, to adjourn the Executive Session and return to the Meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member Sutton and voted, to enter an Executive Session at 7:54 p.m.

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member Bowen and voted, unanimously, to adjourn the Executive Session and return to the Meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Council Member McDonald opened the door to allow citizens to return to the regular meeting.

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member Bowen and voted, unanimously, to direct the City Attorney to draft and to authorize the Mayor to sign a contract on behalf of the City for the purchase of real estate, particularly the office building located at 55 Cantrell Road, Cleveland, Georgia, from MountainCraft Holdings, LLC, provided said purchase contract meets the following conditions:

1. The contract is fully executed on or before January 15, 2026, with a non-refundable deposit in the amount of \$50,000 to be paid by the City upon signing;
2. The contract sets a total purchase price not to exceed \$1,803,400.00, with \$1,100,000 of the purchase price to be paid at closing and the balance of the purchase price to be seller-financed at 7% interest through December 31, 2026, with no pre-payment penalty;
3. The contract calls for closing within 120 days of signing;
4. The contract specifies improvements to be made and substantially completed prior to closing by Seller in conformity with the drawing presented by seller; and
5. The contract meets the approval of the City Attorney, including conformity with Georgia law and inclusion of all terms necessary and customary for the purchase of commercial property.

Mayor Turner stated that over the past several years, the Mayor and City Council have taken a methodical and deliberate approach to planning for the future of the City's municipal facilities. He noted that while each member brings different ideas to the table, they are unified by a central goal: investing in the City's infrastructure and improving facilities in a manner that better serves the community while avoiding a substantial long-term financial burden on taxpayers.

Mayor Turner further stated that with the successful completion of the new Fire Station on East Underwood, the City is now able to formalize the next phase of this plan—the purchase of new property that would allow for the relocation of City Hall and the Police Department into a single, multipurpose municipal complex. He explained that this consolidation would improve efficiency, accessibility, and coordination among City services while making responsible use of public resources.

He noted that the current City Hall, constructed in the 1950s, no longer meets the needs of a modern and growing community, and that those who have visited the facility are familiar with its limitations and the need for improvement.

Mayor Turner stated that he and the City Council anticipate relocating City Hall and the Police Department to the new property during Fiscal Year 2026–2027, which begins July 1, 2026. He concluded by noting that this investment represents a thoughtful, long-term commitment to public service, public safety, and fiscal responsibility, ensuring that the City of Cleveland's facilities will meet the needs of the community for decades to come.

## **ADJOURN**

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member McDonald and voted, unanimously, to adjourn the Meeting of January 5, 2026, at 7:58 p.m.