

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	2027 Legislative Agenda
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested of the resolutions for the 2027 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.
INITIATED BY:	City Manager's Office

Recommendation: Approval is requested of the resolutions for the 2027 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

Background: Each year elected and appointed officials of the Columbus Consolidated Government develop a list of issues important to the citizens of Columbus that require action by the Local Legislative Delegation. Once approved, a meeting will be held with the Delegation to explain the rationale behind these issues and to solicit their support. The Hometown Connection and Legislative Agenda meeting will be held on October 28, 2026.

Analysis: Staff, elected and appointed officials were asked to present issues they felt were important to the operation of city government. Research and justification for these issues were presented to the City Manager and a list was prepared for presentation to the Mayor/Council.

Financial Considerations: The City is expected to receive additional revenues if many of the issues are passed by the Georgia General Assembly.

Recommendations/Actions: Approve those resolution, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

1. MUSCOGEE COUNTY PROBATE COURT JUDGE – SALARIES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation to revise the salary structure to relate the Probate Judge and his Associate Judge's compensation to that of a Chattahoochee Superior Court Judge such that the salary of the Probate Judge shall be no less than 90% of the state base salary plus any locality pay of the Judges of the Superior Court of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit or any future judicial circuit that includes Muscogee County. Additionally, the full-time Associate Probate Judge salary shall be as recommended by the Probate Judge and approved in the annual budget by the Columbus Council, but in no event shall it be less than 90% of the base salary of the Probate Judge without longevity or cost of living increases attributed to the Judge's years of service. *(Recommended by Councilor Walker Garrett and Bruce Huff)*

Explanation:

To be the Probate Judge of Muscogee County requires the same level of legal experience as a superior court judge and the probate court has subject matter jurisdiction that is to some extent broader than the state court; yet, the probate judge's salary is significantly less than the Muscogee State and Superior Court Judges as well as the Clerk of the Superior Court.

To promote judicial pay equity among judges with similar qualifications and jurisdictions, the Probate Judge requests a revision of the salary structure to relate his and his Associate Judge's compensation to that of a Chattahoochee Superior Court Judge. Also, allowing pay equity tied to superior court judges will allow the Muscogee County Probate Judge's salary to be competitive with other similarly situated county probate court judges.

2. FUNDING FOR COUNTIES AND BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR ANY AND ALL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce an amendment to general law to include funding for counties and boards of elections to cover any and all additional expenses of moving to any elections system including paper ballots statewide in Georgia. *(Recommended by Councilor Toyia Tucker)*

Explanation:

The General Assembly has had discussions of moving to a statewide elections system which would include the use of paper ballots. This Council desires that any such change be accompanied by appropriate state funding to counties and boards of elections to cover any and all additional expenses which may arise from the adoption of such an elections system.

3. SUSTAINABLE STATE SUPPORT FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE AND PUBLIC-SAFETY TECHNOLOGY:

The Columbus Consolidated Government respectfully requests that the local legislative delegation sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *predictable, recurring* state support for Georgia Search and Rescue teams and funding opportunities for public-safety technology available to eligible agencies throughout Georgia.

State support should address operational readiness, specialized training and certifications, equipment inspection and maintenance, lifecycle replacement, and critical equipment needs. Funding opportunities should also support drones, robotics, and associated technology that enhance search, rescue, incident assessment, and responder safety. (*Request of Fire-EMS Chief Salvatore J. Scarpa*)

Explanation:

Georgia's search and rescue capabilities depend on participating local agencies maintaining specialized personnel, apparatus, and equipment that can support local, regional, statewide, and interstate emergencies. Sustaining these resources requires continuing investment beyond initial equipment purchases or reimbursement for individual deployments.

Predictable state support would help participating agencies maintain qualifications, address aging equipment, and plan for long-term readiness. A structured process should allow teams to submit documented sustainment and equipment needs for consideration using transparent criteria that account for capability, readiness requirements, operational activity, and regional responsibilities.

Public-safety technology funding should be available to eligible agencies statewide and support acquisition, integration, operator training, maintenance, and ongoing operational costs. Shared use, interoperability, and regional deployment should be encouraged to extend the value of state investment.

4. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE:

The Columbus Consolidated Government requests that the local legislative delegation sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *sustainable* funding and reimbursement pathways for eligible mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine services provided by qualified agencies throughout Georgia.

These efforts should include clarification of existing Medicaid coverage; development or expansion of payment arrangements for eligible assessments, treatment in place, follow-up care, care coordination, and behavioral-health services; and pursuit of any necessary federal approvals. State support should also provide opportunities for demonstration programs and time-limited implementation funding, with transparent participation criteria available to qualified agencies statewide. *(Request of Fire-EMS Chief Salvatore J. Scarpa)*

Explanation:

Mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine programs help connect patients with appropriate medical, behavioral-health, and community services. These programs provide care in community settings and address needs that may not be resolved by emergency transportation alone.

Sustainable reimbursement should recognize eligible clinical services delivered by qualified personnel, including appropriate care that does not require ambulance transport. The Department of Community Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Public Health, and Medicaid care management organizations should identify existing payment opportunities, clarify provider qualifications and billing requirements, and address remaining coverage gaps.

The state should also evaluate barriers to coverage by state-regulated commercial health plans and identify appropriate policy or contractual solutions.

Demonstration programs should evaluate patient outcomes, access to care, repeat emergency-service use, hospital utilization, and service costs. Findings should guide sustainable payment arrangements and broader implementation across Georgia.

5. NEXT GENERATION 911 SYSTEM:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support the ACCG policy position with respect to implementation of the Next Generation 911 system. *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker from Previous Year)*

Explanation:

The Association of County Governments (“ACCG”) has adopted its legislative priorities for the 2027 Session of the Georgia General Assembly. One of the policies adopted by ACCG is to support legislation which would support the implement the Next Generation 911 system in Georgia to include:

1. Appropriating additional funds to build the infrastructure for a statewide Next-Generation 911 system
2. Increasing 911 fees on phone bills to support counties upgrading their infrastructure to be able to use the Next Generation 911 System
3. Supporting the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority’s initiatives and appropriations for the implementation of Next Generation 911

A RESOLUTION**No. _____**

WHEREAS, the salaries for the Muscogee Probate Judge and Associate Judge have previously been established by Council budget ordinances including but not limited to Ordinance No.03-44; and,

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 15-9-63 provides for the calculation of a minimum salary for probate judges based on the County's population. The minimum salary may be increased by the applications of longevity and cost of living increases; and,

WHEREAS, the O.C.G.A. § 15-9-63 also provides that a local supplement may also be provided to the Probate Judge; and,

WHEREAS, to be the Probate Judge of Muscogee County requires the same level of legal experience as a superior court judge and has subject matter jurisdiction that is broader than the state court; and,

WHEREAS, to promote judicial pay equity among judges and to keep pace with current economic conditions, the Probate Judge requests a revision of the salary structure to relate his and his Associate Judge's compensation to that of a Chattahoochee Superior Court Judge; and,

WHEREAS this Council desires that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation to create a Local Act to contain the provisions set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

We hereby respectfully request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation to create a local act to provide as follows:

1. The salary of the Muscogee County Probate Judge shall be no less than 90% of the state base salary plus any locality pay of the Judges of the Superior Court of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit or any future judicial circuit that includes Muscogee County.
2. The salary of any full-time Associate Judge appointed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-9-2.1 shall be as recommended by the Probate Judge and approved in the annual budget by the Columbus Council, but in no event shall it be less than 90% of the base salary of the Probate Judge without longevity or cost of living increases attributed to the Judge's years of service.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 13th day of October 2026 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION**NO.**_____

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation introduce an amendment to general law to include funding for counties and boards of elections to cover any and all additional expenses of moving to any elections system including paper ballots statewide in Georgia.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has had discussions of moving to a statewide elections system which would include the use of paper ballots;

WHEREAS, this Council desires that any such change be accompanied by appropriate state funding to counties and boards of elections to cover any and all additional expenses which may arise from the adoption of such an elections system.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce an amendment to general law to include funding for counties and boards of elections to cover any and all additional expenses of moving to any elections system including paper ballots statewide in Georgia. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ____ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION
NO. _____

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation introduce an amendment sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *predictable, recurring* state support for Georgia Search and Rescue teams and funding opportunities for public-safety technology available to eligible agencies throughout Georgia.

WHEREAS, Georgia’s search and rescue capabilities depend on participating local agencies maintaining specialized personnel, apparatus, and equipment that can support local, regional, statewide, and interstate emergencies. Sustaining these resources requires continuing investment beyond initial equipment purchases or reimbursement for individual deployments; and

WHEREAS, Public-safety technology funding should be available to eligible agencies statewide and support acquisition, integration, operator training, maintenance, and ongoing operational costs. Shared use, interoperability, and regional deployment should be encouraged to extend the value of state investment.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *predictable, recurring* state support for Georgia Search and Rescue teams and funding opportunities for public-safety technology available to eligible agencies throughout Georgia. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the 13th day of October, 2026 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

 Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

 B.H. “Skip” Henderson III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION**NO.**_____

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *sustainable* funding and reimbursement pathways for eligible mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine services provided by qualified agencies throughout Georgia.

WHEREAS, Mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine programs help connect patients with appropriate medical, behavioral-health, and community services. These programs provide care in community settings and address needs that may not be resolved by emergency transportation alone; and

WHEREAS, Sustainable reimbursement should recognize eligible clinical services delivered by qualified personnel, including appropriate care that does not require ambulance transport. The Department of Community Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Public Health, and Medicaid care management organizations should identify existing payment opportunities, clarify provider qualifications and billing requirements, and address remaining coverage gaps. The state should also evaluate barriers to coverage by state-regulated commercial health plans and identify appropriate policy or contractual solutions.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly sponsor or support legislation, appropriations, and administrative initiatives establishing *sustainable* funding and reimbursement pathways for eligible mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine services provided by qualified agencies throughout Georgia. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ____ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

**A Resolution
No. _____**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL DELEGATION TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY SUPPORT THE ACCG POLICY POSITION WITH RESPECT
TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEXT GENERATION 911 SYSTEM.**

WHEREAS, the Association of County Governments (“ACCG”) has adopted its legislative priorities for the 2027 Session of the Georgia General Assembly; and,

WHEREAS, one of the policies adopted by ACCG is to support legislation which would support the implementation of the Next Generation 911 System in several ways; and,

WHEREAS, this Council desires that the members of its local delegation support the efforts of ACCG in this respect.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY
RESOLVES:**

This Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly work with ACCG and other organizations to support legislation which would provide support to implement the Next Generation 911 System in Georgia to include:

1. Appropriating additional funds to build the infrastructure for a statewide Next-Generation 911 system;
2. Increasing 911 fees on phone bills to support counties upgrading their infrastructure to be able to use the Next Generation 911 System; and
3. Supporting the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority’s initiatives and appropriations for the implementation of Next Generation 911.

Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ____ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.