

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	2026 Legislative Agenda
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested of the resolution for the 2026 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 resolution for the 2026 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 requires 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 15, 2025.

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: Items 2 would have an impact on City and School District revenues. Item 3 would impact City expenses.

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

1. COUNCIL APPOINTMENT – 30 DAYS AFTER VACANCY:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce an amendment to Section 6-201 so as to allow at least 30 days after a Council vacancy before a council appointment to fill an unexpired term pursuant to this Section. *(Request of Councilor Travis Chambers)*

Explanation:

The Columbus Charter Section 6-201 authorizes a Council appointment of a person to fill a Council vacancy under certain conditions. There is no waiting period required after such vacancy occurs prior to such an appointment. The Council desires a waiting period of at least 30 days.

2. SENIOR HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS REFERENDUM:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly enact local legislation so that the homestead exemption of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age and older be increased to \$30,000, for Muscogee County ad valorem taxes and Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter; and that the homestead exemption for residents qualifying under OCGA 48-5-52 and defined as qualified residents 62 years of age and older, be increased for Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter. The exemptions granted herein shall not become effective and shall not apply unless this act is approved by a majority of Muscogee County voters at a referendum set as specified by the General Assembly for November, 2026. *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker)*

Explanation:

Georgia Laws 1991, page 4265 granted homestead exemptions to residents from all Muscogee county ad valorem taxes for county purposes in the amount of \$13,500 and in the amount of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age or older and also granted an exemption from all Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes for education purposes in the amount of \$13,500 and in the amount of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age or older. This Council desires that the homestead exemption of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age and older be increased to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter, for Muscogee County ad valorem taxes and Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes and that the homestead exemption for residents qualifying under OCGA 48-5-52 and defined as qualified residents 62 years of age and older, be increased for Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter.

3. PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR AMENDMENT:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly enact local legislation to amend the Charter of Columbus, Georgia to remove the Mayor's assigned duties to direct, supervise, and coordinate the administration and activities of the Department of Public Safety; to create a new position of Public Safety Director; and to provide for the qualifications, appointment, removal of that position. The Charter amendments referred to herein shall not become effective and shall not apply unless this act is approved by a majority of Muscogee County voters at a referendum set as specified by the General Assembly for November, 2026. *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker)*

Explanation:

It is the desire of this Council to allow the voters to determine whether a dedicated Director of Public Safety should be added as a City Officer defined by the Columbus, Georgia Charter. Such changes would require amendments to the Columbus Charter which must be adopted by local act of the General Assembly and approved by a majority of Muscogee County voters.

4. OPEN MEETINGS AMENDMENT:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation at the 2026 Legislative Session to amend O.C.G.A 50-14-1(g) so that telephonic or video meetings can be held by local boards and commissions under non-emergent circumstances as long as the public can hear, view and participate in the meeting contemporaneously. *(Request of Councilor Charmaine Crabb)*

Explanation:

Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 50-14-1(g) provides that local government boards and commissions may only hold a legal open meeting when a quorum of the members can be present in person unless there is a declared emergency. The General Assembly could amend the Open Meeting Law to allow local governments and their boards and commissions to take advantage of the same teleconferencing ability and permit meetings to be held when there is not a quorum of members present.

5. WEAPONS IN RECREATION CENTERS:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly work with the office of Legislative Counsel to introduce or support general legislation to amend Part 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the Georgia Code to prohibit the carrying of firearms and other dangerous weapons in Recreation Centers/facilities which are owned and run by local governments. *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker)*

Explanation:

Columbus has suffered incidents stemming from the use of dangerous weapons and firearms in its public recreation centers to include one recent fatality. Many of the programs at these public recreation centers are attended by minors who are of school age. The current provisions of state law prohibits weapons carry in School Safety Zones and governmental building where weapons screening is in place, but does not allow for a no weapons policy in recreation centers owned by the Consolidated Government.

6. AMENDMENT OF CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST PROVISION FOR REDEVELOPMENT POWERS LAW:

The Columbus Council requests the local legislative delegation introduce/support legislation to revise and to clarify the conflict-of-interest provisions in the Redevelopment Powers Law which address the participation of local government elective and appointive officials and employees in the creation and administration of Tax Allocation Districts. *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker, Glenn Davis and Charmaine Crabb/Carry Over From Previous Years)*

Explanation:

1) With respect to property acquired after the designation of a redevelopment area or TAD, the current law very broadly prohibits any "elected official, appointed official, **or employee** of any political subdivision, board, commission, or redevelopment agency from voluntarily acquiring any interest, direct or indirect, in any property contract or transaction or proposed contract or transaction in connection with the redevelopment of that redevelopment area..." The proposed revision would remove the blanket prohibition against voluntary property acquisition in a redevelopment area and instead provide that any official or employee who has a direct ownership interest in a property that is proposed to receive payment of redevelopment costs shall disclose the interest in writing to the legislative body and shall not vote or in any way participate in considering the matter or seek to influence the votes of others on the matter.

2) The current law requires that any elected or appointed official or employee of a political subdivision who has acquired any interest direct or indirect in property in the redevelopment area within the two years immediately prior to the date the plan is submitted to the local legislative body shall disclose the interest in writing 30 days in advance and "not participate in any action of the political subdivision which affects that property." The revision would cut the time of written notice to 5 days and limit the coverage of the provision to public officers as defined by O.C.G.A. Section 21-5-3 (22) instead of the current general reference to all elected officials, appointed officials and employees.

3) The proposed revision also refines the definition of the property interest covered by the conflict provision. The current law covers any transaction which facilitates the acquisition "any interest direct or indirect" in property and substitutes a direct ownership interest in property as defined by O.C.G.A. Section 21-5-3(8).

7. MILITARY RETIREE STATE TAX EXEMPTIONS:

The Columbus Council is requesting that the legislative delegation support efforts to exempt military retiree pay from state income tax in order to attract military retirees to Columbus, Georgia as recommended by the Greater Columbus, Georgia Chamber of Commerce. (*Request of Councilor Tucker /Carryover From Previous Years*)

Explanation:

- Exempt Military Retiree Pay From Georgia Taxes.

- Ø Of the five states bordering Georgia, four do not tax military retiree pay.
- Ø Border cities are at a competitive disadvantage to attract veterans to area.
- Ø Consider a transition by beginning with an exemption to those military retiring in 2018, then work back each year until all are captured.

A RESOLUTION
NO. _____

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION INTRODUCE AN AMENDMENT TO COLUMBUS CHARTER SECTION 6-201 SO AS TO ALLOW AT LEAST 30 DAYS AFTER A COLUMBUS COUNCIL VACANCY BEFORE A COUNCIL APPOINTMENT TO FILL AN UNEXPIRED TERM PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

WHEREAS, Columbus Charter Section 6-201 authorizes a Council appointment of a person to fill a Council vacancy under certain conditions; and,

WHEREAS, no waiting period is required after such a vacancy occurs prior to such an appointment and the Council desires a waiting period of at least 30 days.

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 Section 6-201 so as to allow at least 30 days after a Council vacancy before a council appointment to fill an unexpired term pursuant to this Section as suggested in the redline below.

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 23rd day of September, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____
Councilor Anker voting	_____
Councilor Chambers voting	_____
Councilor Cogle voting	_____
Councilor Crabb voting	_____
Councilor Davis voting	_____
Councilor Garrett voting	_____
Councilor Hickey voting	_____
Councilor Huff voting	_____
Councilor Tucker voting	_____

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor

RESOLUTION

NO. _____

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING AN INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES LEVIED IN MUSCOGEE COUNTY FOR THE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WHICH APPLIES TO THE HOMESTEAD OF EACH QUALIFIED RESIDENT 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER; AND TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES LEVIED IN MUSCOGEE COUNTY FOR THE MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WHICH APPLIES TO THE HOMESTEAD OF EACH QUALIFIED RESIDENT 62 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

WHEREAS, Georgia Laws 1991, page 4265 granted homestead exemptions to residents from all Muscogee county ad valorem taxes for county purposes in the amount of \$13,500 and in the amount of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age or older and also granted an exemption from all Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes for education purposes in the amount of \$13,500 and in the amount of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age or older; and

WHEREAS, this Council desires that the homestead exemption of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age and older be increased to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter, for Muscogee County ad valorem taxes and Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes; and that the homestead exemption for residents qualifying under OCGA 48-5-52 and defined as qualified residents 62 years of age and older, be increased for Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter.

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

This Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly enact local legislation so that the homestead exemption of \$21,500 for qualified residents 65 years of age and older be increased to \$30,000, for Muscogee County ad valorem taxes and Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter; and that the homestead exemption for residents qualifying under OCGA 48-5-52 and defined as qualified residents 62 years of age and older, be increased for Muscogee County School District ad valorem taxes to \$30,000, beginning in tax year for January 1, 2027, and thereafter. The exemptions granted herein shall not become effective and shall not apply unless this act is approved by a majority of Muscogee County voters at a referendum set as specified by the General Assembly for November, 2026.

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 the regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 23rd day of September, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Anker voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey 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 AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA TO REMOVE THE MAYOR'S ASSIGNED DUTIES TO DIRECT, SUPERVISE, AND COORDINATE THE ADMINISTRATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY; TO CREATE A NEW POSITION OF PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR; TO PROVIDE FOR THE QUALIFICATIONS, APPOINTMENT, AND REMOVAL FOR THAT POSITION; AND TO REQUEST A REFERENDUM OF THE VOTERS OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA /MUSCOGEE COUNTY TO APPROVE SUCH AMENDMENTS.

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Council to allow the voters to determine whether a dedicated Director of Public Safety should be added as a City Officer defined by the Columbus, Georgia Charter; and,

WHEREAS, such changes would require amendments to the Columbus Charter which must be adopted by local act of the General Assembly.

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

This Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly enact local legislation to amend the Charter of Columbus, Georgia to remove the Mayor's assigned duties to direct, supervise, and coordinate the administration and activities of the Department of Public Safety; to create a new position of Public Safety Director; and to provide for the qualifications, appointment, removal of that position. The Charter amendments referred to herein shall not become effective and shall not apply unless this act is approved by a majority of Muscogee County voters at a referendum set as specified by the General Assembly for November, 2026.

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 the regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 23rd day of September, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Anker voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey 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 LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE GEORGIA OPEN
MEETINGS ACT TO ALLOW THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES MAY
HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS VIA TELECONFERENCE OR OTHER DIGITAL MEANS
ON THE SAME BASIS AS STATE AGENCIES**

WHEREAS, during the period of COVID-19 Emergency the Mayor, Council and City staff have invested in and perfected the use of technology that allows for the conduct of virtual meetings that allow contemporaneous observing and participation in meetings of its Council and various Boards and Commissions; and,

WHEREAS, Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 50-14-1(f) allows statewide agencies to provide for the use of meetings by teleconference; and,

WHEREAS, Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 50-14-1(g) provides that local government boards and commissions may only hold a legal open meeting when a quorum of the members can be present in person unless there is a declared emergency; and,

WHEREAS, the General Assembly could amend the Open Meeting Law to allow local governments and their boards and commissions to take advantage of the same teleconferencing ability and permit meetings to be held when there is not a quorum of members present.

**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 at the 2026 Legislative Session to amend O.C.G.A 50-14-1(g) so that telephonic or video meetings can be held by local boards and commissions under non-emergent circumstances as long as the public can hear, view and participate in the meeting contemporaneously.

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 23rd day of September 2025, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Anker voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey 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 STATEWIDE LEGISLATION TO RESTRICT PROHIBIT THE CARRY OF WEAPONS IN A PUBLIC RECREATION CENTER WHICH IS OWNED BY A LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

WHEREAS, Columbus has suffered incidents stemming from the use of dangerous weapons and firearms in its public recreation centers to include one recent fatality; and,

WHEREAS, many of the programs at these public recreation centers are attended by minors who are of school age; and,

WHEREAS, the current provisions of state law would prohibit weapons carry in School Safety Zones and governmental buildings where weapons screening is in place, but does not allow for a no weapons policy in recreation centers owned by the Consolidated Government.

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

This Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly work with the Office of Legislative Counsel to introduce or support general legislation to amend Part 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the Georgia Code to prohibit the carrying of firearms and other dangerous weapons in Recreation Centers/facilities which are owned and run by local governments.

Introduced at the regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 23rd day of September, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.	
Councilor Anker voting	_____.	
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.	
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.	
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.	
Councilor Davis voting	_____.	
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.	
Councilor Hickey voting	_____.	
Councilor Huff voting	_____.	
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.	

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION**NO. _____**

WHEREAS, the conflict of interest provision of Redevelopment Powers Law, Title 36, Chapter 44 is broadly and unclearly worded in a way that leaves all CCG officials, even employees whose positions have nothing to do with the creation or administration of a Tax Allocation District, subject to possible disclosure requirements and prohibitions from voluntarily acquiring a direct or indirect interest in property in any TAD created by Council; and,

WHEREAS, this Council desires that the conflict of interest provision applicable to TADs be more specific and limited as to the persons covered by its requirements and use definitions consistent with the Ethics in Government Act found in Chapter 5 of Title 21 of the Georgia Code.

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

This Council hereby requests that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce/support the attached proposed amendment to O.C.G.A. § 36-44-21 or any similar proposal, which clarifies that code section by providing standard definitions and eliminates the prohibition against the acquisition of property in TADs by all CCG employees. 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.

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 23rd day of September 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Anker voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey 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 LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ALLOW AN
EXEMPTION SIMILAR TO THAT IN ALABAMA FROM STATE INCOME TAX FOR
MILITARY RETIREES.**

WHEREAS, this legislation will allow Columbus, Georgia to remain a competitive economic hub that continues to attract military families and retirees to our community; and,

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have discussed issues important to the efficient operation of the Columbus Consolidated Government and the quality of life for its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, this issue requires action in the 2026 General Assembly Session.

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

We hereby respectfully request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation at the 2026 General Assembly that would allow an exemption similar to that in Alabama from state income tax for military retirees to maintain Columbus, Georgia as a competitive economic hub that continues to attract military families and retirees to our community.

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 23rd day of September 2025, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Thomas voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor