



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Donya L. Sartor  
FROM: Joslyn C. Jackson, Esq.  
DATE: December 12, 2025  
RE: **Effect of DDA Interim Investigative Report and Hall Booth Smith Investigation on October 22, 2025 Ordinance**

### ISSUE PRESENTED

Whether the October 22, 2025 Ordinance appointing an independent investigator to conduct an administrative investigation into certain financial transactions remains necessary or operative in light of (1) the Downtown Development Authority's completed Interim Investigative Report and (2) Hall Booth Smith's acknowledgment that its engagement exceeded the scope of the Ordinance and its subsequent halt of the investigation.

### SUMMARY CONCLUSION

While the October 22 Ordinance is not facially invalid, it is now moot as applied and unnecessary to accomplish its stated purpose. The factual inquiry the Ordinance was intended to authorize has already been completed by the proper governing entity, and the City's retained investigator has halted further action after acknowledging the limits of the Ordinance and in light of the Mayor's notice of an intended Temporary Restraining Order. Continued expenditure of public funds to pursue an overlapping or duplicative investigation would not serve a legitimate governmental purpose and would expose the City to unnecessary legal and fiscal risk.

### BACKGROUND

On October 22, 2025, the Mayor and Council adopted an Ordinance appointing an independent investigator pursuant to Article VII of the City Code. The Ordinance authorizes an administrative investigation into all financial transactions occurring from, to, and between the City of Jonesboro and the Jonesboro Downtown Development Authority for fiscal year 2025, beginning January 1, 2025 and ending October 20, 2025.

On December 3, 2025, the Jonesboro Downtown Development Authority released an Interim Investigative Report addressing the propriety of certain 2025 financial transactions, including those



related to the Juneteenth Celebration. The report includes a review of expenditures, approvals, sponsorships, reimbursements, applicable bylaws, and interviews of relevant individuals.

Separately, Hall Booth Smith, P.C., the firm selected as independent investigator under the Ordinance, acknowledged in writing that the scope of its engagement letter exceeded the authority granted by the Ordinance and halted its investigation pending further action by the Council.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **1. Scope and Purpose of the October 22 Ordinance**

The Ordinance authorizes a limited administrative investigation for a defined purpose: to gather facts regarding City–DDA financial transactions during a specific 2025 time-period. It does not authorize an open-ended inquiry into City operations, general finances, or conduct outside City–DDA transactional activity.

The Ordinance is investigative in nature, not adjudicative. Its sole function is to obtain information.

### **2. The DDA Interim Investigative Report Satisfies the Ordinance’s Purpose**

The DDA Interim Investigative Report examined the same category of transactions and the same general time period addressed by the Ordinance. The report analyzed whether expenditures were authorized, whether DDA bylaws were followed, how sponsorship funds were handled, and whether payments were properly approved or reimbursed.

Importantly, the DDA is the governmental entity with statutory authority over its own finances and expenditures. As such, its investigation is not ancillary to the City’s inquiry; it is primary. The factual record the Ordinance sought to create now already exists.

### **3. Duplication of Investigative Efforts Is Not a Legitimate Public Purpose**

Georgia law disfavors the use of public funds for duplicative governmental actions when the underlying objective has already been achieved. Once the relevant facts are known and documented, continuing an investigation serves no legitimate administrative function.

Here, a second investigation would not uncover new categories of transactions or expand the City’s authority. It would simply re-examine matters already reviewed by the entity with direct jurisdiction over the expenditures.

### **4. Effect of Hall Booth Smith’s Halted Investigation**



Hall Booth Smith's acknowledgment that its engagement exceeded the Ordinance's scope and its decision to halt further investigative activity is significant. There is currently no active investigation underway pursuant to the Ordinance. The firm has made clear that it cannot proceed without either narrowing its work or the Council amending the Ordinance.

Given that the Ordinance's investigative purpose has already been fulfilled by the DDA report, there is no legal or practical justification for restarting or expanding the investigation.

### **5. Mootness as Applied**

Although the Ordinance remains valid on its face, it is now moot as applied. Subsequent events, the completion of a comprehensive DDA investigation and the cessation of the City's investigator, have eliminated any remaining controversy or investigative necessity.

Proceeding further would not advance transparency or accountability and would unnecessarily expend public funds.

### **CONCLUSION**

The October 22, 2025 Ordinance was enacted to authorize a fact-finding investigation. Those facts have now been gathered, documented, and reported by the Downtown Development Authority, the entity with primary authority over the transactions in question. The City's retained investigator has halted further action after acknowledging the Ordinance's limits.

Accordingly, while the Ordinance remains on the books, it no longer serves an operative purpose. Any further investigation would be duplicative, fiscally imprudent, and legally unnecessary. The Mayor may reasonably conclude that the Ordinance's objectives have been satisfied and that no further action is warranted.