

separation, regardless of notice. The City can no longer withhold payout for failure to give two weeks' notice.

Employees meeting service requirements would be allowed to cash in unused personal leave, subject to available funds:

- 3–5 years of service: May cash in up to 40 hours, retaining at least 40 hours.
- 5+ years of service: May cash in up to 80 hours, with a revised proposal requiring only 40 hours remaining.
- Participation is optional; employees may cash in fewer hours if desired.

The cash-in option would occur once annually, likely in the fourth quarter, and would be contingent upon available budget savings. Funds would not be pre-budgeted due to fluctuating usage and would instead be determined based on year-end financial performance.

Requests would require verification by HR (hours and years of service) and Finance (fund availability), with the Mayor serving as final approval authority. Councilmembers Curney raised concerns about transparency and asked that administrative verification steps be clearly stated in writing.

Approximately seven employees citywide currently meet eligibility thresholds. The program is not intended to count as income toward annual salary and excludes part-time employees who do not accrue leave. The program also aims to standardize and formalize past informal practices related to leave accrual and payout, ensuring consistency, equity, and fiscal control.

The Mayor indicated the proposal would be revised to reflect Council feedback—particularly regarding approval language, retained leave balances, timing, and funding clarity—and brought back for formal consideration at a future meeting.

D. Council to consider proposed salary increases for full-time sworn law enforcement officers and probation officers.

Police Chief Cato spoke regarding the proposed salary increases for sworn law enforcement officers. He emphasized that law enforcement agencies nationwide are competing for officers and that the City of Jonesboro currently ranks at the lowest pay tier within the county and surrounding jurisdictions, averaging approximately \$8,000.00 below comparable metro-area salaries.

Chief Cato reported that recruitment has become extremely challenging and stressed that it is critical for the City to become competitive in order to attract qualified candidates. He stated that the timing is pivotal and urged Mayor and Council to consider the importance of public safety for both residents and officials.

Funding would come from salary savings (\$84,581.82 current staffing vacancies) and (\$60,217.28 increase related to future staffing for unfilled positions). It was confirmed that these funds are already available within the existing budget. (14% increase would go towards current full staff and 10% would go towards probation.) Lastly, Chief Cato spoke about the City's hiring bonus, referral fee, and tuition reimbursement. Mayor Sartor stated that all staff are eligible for the referral fee and tuition reimbursement. Also, she stated that next year's budget needs to reflect a higher minimum wage and compensation increase across the board for everyone. This does not include "non-post certified officers."

The Mayor clarified that savings generated from departmental vacancies are part of the General Fund, not exclusively tied to a single department. She explained that while a department, such as the Police Department, may use a portion of its savings for its own needs, remaining funds may be reallocated citywide to promote equity across departments. The Mayor emphasized the importance of balancing departmental needs while ensuring fairness

and retention of quality employees throughout the organization. This underscores the need to remain competitive in order to attract and retain qualified employees.

RESULT: Approved (Vote was unanimous)

MOVER: Councilmember A. Dixon

SECONDER: Councilmember Curney

Point of Personal Privilege - At this time, Councilmember A. Dixon acknowledged the Mayor of Stockbridge for attending tonight's Work Session.

E. Council to discuss Runsboro GA 5K.

Councilmember A. Dixon discussed the proposed Runsboro GA 5K, a community wellness initiative established in 2019 to promote health, unity, and engagement. He explained that the 5K run/walk would require coordination among Public Safety and Public Works. The Police Department advised that approximately 18–20 officers would be needed for route safety and intersection control, consistent with similar past events, and that officers would not need to be paid by the event organizers. Public Works support would be required for barricades and road closures.

Mayor Sartor expressed concern about the short planning timeline, emphasizing that 5K events typically require at least six months to one year of advance planning due to staffing, funding, and administrative demands. She reiterated prior administrative guidance to limit summer events to one per month and noted that 60 days' notice is insufficient for an event of this scale. The Mayor stated that if the event could not occur without Public Works or additional staff support, it should be scheduled later in the year.

Councilmember Messick echoed the need for adequate advance notice, citing prior resident complaints related to road closures and access issues during similar events. She stressed the importance of early notification to residence and business owners along the route.

The following discussion of the City's existing summer event schedule and staffing constraints, Mayor and Council expressed consensus that the Runsboro GA 5K should be considered for a fall timeframe, such as August or September 2026, to allow sufficient planning, staff coordination, and public notification.

F. Council to consider Roadway Striping on Fayetteville Road (Tara Boulevard to Smith Street) for safety improvements.

Police Chief Cato led the discussion. He stated that Public Works Director Heard was absent but had submitted a written recommendation. He advised that this road is one of many roads throughout the City that needs to be re-striped. However, he cited recent complaints and his near head-on collision attributed to faded or missing striping as the reason the issue was elevated for immediate attention.

Staff recommended restriping the roadway at a cost of approximately \$11,658.00. Wildcat Striping and Paving Company were recommended to perform the work. While the City has multiple areas in need of restriping, this segment was prioritized due to safety concerns. It was confirmed that funding for the striping is included in the current budget and that all recommended expenditures have been validated financially.

RESULT: CONSENT AGENDA 04/13/2026

G. Council to consider releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Sanitation Services.

A motion was made to table the item until the return of Public Works Director Heard.