

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 2:30p.m. in the Richard A. Bolin Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor James Shepherd presiding.

**PRESENT**

Mayor James Shepherd: Council members present: Scott Berta, Jim Thomasson, Jennifer Morrison, Cynthia Jenkins, Paul Guillaume and Dustin Koritko. Also present: City Manager, Cleatus Phillips; Assistant City Manager, Hasco Craver; Assistant City Manager, Meg Kelsey; City Clerk, Megan Shea and City Attorney, Brad Sears.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Shepherd called the meeting to order. Reverend Connor Bell delivered the invocation.

**READING OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 27, 2026**

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 27, 2026 and adopt them as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**B. 1 Appointment – Christmas Commission, 3-year term**

Continue to next agenda.

**C. 1 Appointment – Convention Center Authority, 3-year term**

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to appoint Melanie Tomlinson for a 3-year term.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

**D. 1 Appointment – Development Authority, 4-year term**

Continue to next agenda.

**E. 1 Appointment – Ethics Commission, 2- year term**

Continue to next agenda.

**F. 1 Appointment – Housing Authority, 5-year term**

Mayor Shepherd reappointed Jess Barron for a 5-year term. He also noted that the Housing Authority, to stay in HUD compliance, will be adding 2 more members to their board. One resident and one non-resident. That will happen shortly.

**G. Development Authority Presentation of UGA's College of Environment & Design Temple Avenue Project**

Mr. Parks Avery, Chairman of the Newnan Development Authority presented. He first mentioned a program that they sponsor, giving a stipend to teachers embedded in manufacturing plants, working for a week over the summer, to develop a curriculum about science and math. They then go back to their students to explain employment opportunities in the community.

Mr. Avery introduced the other members of the Newnan Development Authority. They are assisted by Assistant City Manager Hasco Craver.

He explained that a few years ago, they decided that helping to redevelop the corridors coming into downtown Newnan would be a worthy goal. The first project was Temple Avenue. They partnered with the University of Georgia in Athens and their College of Environment & Design. Their students did some studies, looking at how to make it more vibrant and help with safety.

Temple Avenue seems to be a barrier between the neighborhoods on the south side and north side. The students questioned how to bridge that gap. Mr. Avery showed some of the renderings that the students did. The major themes they came up with were connecting the neighborhoods on both sides, add residential to drive commercial, bringing buildings closer to the roadway for pedestrian use, integrate the LINC when possible and consider pocket parks. The renderings showed a lot of treescape and traffic mitigation. They also went and looked at the old Hospital Rd. property and came up with some ideas of how to use that property.

Phase 2 of this has already started and the new students are studying Greenville St. coming into downtown. Mr. Avery said this is funded out of their budget. They have discussed the idea of having a meet and greet with the property owners on Temple Avenue and show them what the students came up with.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked if she could get printed copies of the maps and renderings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**H. Consideration of Traffic Study Report on Newnan LINC Section 13**

Mr. Craver stated that this LINC section was broken down into 3 parcels, one is the Board of Education, two is the Newnan High School parcel and three is Newnan Utilities. The project consultants were asked to engage a traffic engineering consultant to look at the need for stop conditions along Sewell Rd. As a result, Staff is recommending an all-way stop condition at Spence Ave. and Sewell Rd.

The study also looked at the potential installation of an all-way stop condition at Armory Rd. and Sewell Rd. Staff is not recommending that based on conversations with the Coweta County school system. During the day the School Resource Officer (SRO) can manage the volume, better than a stop sign would. Staff recommended an RRFB, rapid flashing beacon, at that intersection.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked about the SRO. Mr. Craver said he is there during peak school times and the school prefers that, as opposed to a stop condition. Councilwoman Jenkins asked who recommended the stop condition?

Mr. Vern Wilburn, traffic engineer, said they projected volumes for bikes and pedestrians based on another LINC section and they think it warrants a multi-way stop. He said safety was one reason, especially with younger users. He said it was right on the edge and could go either way. He commented that there is a sight issue as well, with the curvature of Sewell Rd. He said the RRFB's are well observed.

Councilwoman Jenkins expressed safety concerns with not having the flashing beacon at the intersection. She then asked about the LINC extending to the lake, which has been discussed in the past. Mr. Craver said that was not considered as part of Section 13. The master plan does show future continuation to the lake.

Councilman Thomasson said that pedestrian safety should be first. Sewell Rd. is like a racetrack and people do not think about stopping. He thinks the flashing beacon is not enough and is in favor of a three-way stop. Councilman Koritko asked about a pre-warning such as rumble strips. Mr. Wilburn said it's not typical.

Council discussed the speed limit on Sewell Rd. and Mr. Klahr explained that there is no school zone designated on Sewell Rd. Mr. Craver said given that it was right on the edge of being needed and the partnership with the school system, there are other things that can be done for pedestrian safety.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to adopt the report and recommendations with the change to an all-way stop at Armory Rd. and Sewell Rd.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

Councilman Thomasson asked Mr. Phillips about the section that goes into Carl Miller Park and previous discussions about asking Newnan Utilities to reimburse the city for that. Mr. Phillips said they have information they could present to Newnan Utilities, if that is what Council wants Staff to do, as it would be an agreement between City Council and the Water & Light Commission.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to instruct Staff to interact with Newnan Utilities about the possibility of them reimbursing the City for the section of the LINC that runs through Carl Miller Park.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I. Consideration of Contract Award for Farmer Street Cemetery Improvements Phase 1

Mr. Craver said that the recommendation is for Piedmont Paving to be awarded the contract for Phase 1. He then thanked many people that have helped with this including the African American Alliance and the Farmer Street Cemetery Commission. He showed the GPR survey that had been done a few years ago by Paleo West, who identified 455 potential burial signatures. Then the design plan was shown. The contract to Piedmont Paving would be \$777,935.91.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked what precautions will be taken for the few burial sites that overlap with this phase? Mr. Craver said New South was engaged as a consultant to look further into those three specifically and no remains were identified. One site was abandoned utilities. Councilwoman Jenkins also stated she wanted to make sure that construction equipment and materials would be kept in appropriate places while the work is going on.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to award the contract to Piedmont Paving in the amount of \$777,935.91 as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

J. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend Chapter 3, Alcoholic Beverages, by deleting Section 3-67, Growlers, adding a new Section 3-67, Specialty Beer and Wine Shop

Mr. Phillips explained that back in December, Council was approached with a request by a local business owner to draft an ordinance to allow a specialty wine shop and Council asked Staff to proceed. Questions arose as to how this would be different from a growler license. The growler license does not allow the onsite consumption of wine. There was also feedback from some restaurants asking for a limit on wine consumption per person per day, since there is no 50% food provision. Staff is recommending replacing the growler license with a beer/wine specialty store. That would not change the serving of growlers as is.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked what keeps any merchant downtown from purchasing a \$1500 license and having coolers to sell beer and wine. Mr. Phillips said that anyone holding a license in the state of Georgia must go through authorized distributors and cannot just purchase alcohol at the grocery store. This would allow any retail business to obtain a license though. Mr. Sears explained that any retailer can do that now under the current ordinance except for distilled spirits. This just says you can have limited onsite consumption without having to have 50% food sales. Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked if an inventory minimum could be added, to make this a true specialty shop?

Mayor Shepherd asked Mr. Phillips to explain the changes with the new section. Mr. Phillips said today the primary thing they can't do is onsite consumption of wine, under the growler ordinance. Councilman Koritko asked since the new year has already started then would Ace Growlers be grandfathered in with this new ordinance? Mr. Phillips said they would be issued an updated license at no charge.

Mr. Jason Kanner, with Ace Growlers spoke and asked why the growler license wasn't just amended to allow pouring wine. He also pointed out that with liquor stores, they have a minimum inventory and license maximum. There is nothing stopping any retailer from selling beer and wine, as this is written.

Mayor Shepherd asked if this change would allow more places to get this kind of license? Mr. Sears explained that the state of Georgia allows either sale of beer by the package, wine by the bottle and distilled spirits by the bottle, to go and you cannot serve those in broken packages to go. The growler license is different and allows for package sales and sales of beer in a special unbroken package from tapped kegs. Then there is onsite consumption when it can be poured from a broken package. With this new section, there is no change on the growler side. The new section also addresses wine tastings and wine shops. Currently for a growler license you must be in the 9-block downtown radius, this would expand and allow any business to get one. Councilman Guillaume stated there should be a way to limit the number of licenses in the district. Mr. Phillips said they could add a minimum inventory.

Mr. Kanner also mentioned that Council is considering alcohol licenses to be approved administratively and not to come to Council and he said that is not common anywhere and does not give a voice for opposition. Mr. Phillips said that was not his findings. Mayor Shepherd explained that the rationale behind that was to save some time for the applicant. Mr. Phillips said that the reason for the public hearing with alcohol licenses was not so someone could oppose it, it was an opportunity for someone to present information that staff did not have, that would disqualify someone from getting a license.

Councilwoman Jenkins suggested that this item be tabled, as there are a lot of questions. Mr. Phillips asked if Council would like staff to do additional research and bring this back?

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to instruct staff to do additional research for Council.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

### **VISITORS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS & COMPLAINTS**

#### **K. Request from Ansley Murray to close Madison St. between Jackson St. and Jefferson St. for Craft & Brews Markets in 2026**

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the request.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

L. Request from Sandra Strozier, President/CEO of the Newnan Housing Authority, to waive the 2025 PILOT payment to the City of Newnan

Councilman Thomasson asked to postpone this item, as a letter had just been received regarding this request and he had not had time to thoroughly read it over. Mayor Shepherd asked if postponing would cause any issues with budgeting? Mr. Phillips said a decision would need to be made by the end of February, to close the 2025 books.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to postpone this item to the next meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

Off Agenda

Ms. Melissa Griffis, on behalf of Imperium Development, LLC, who is Item B on the work session agenda and scheduled for the next council meeting for public hearing. They received feedback from Planning Commission and staff, wanting some additional intersections and they have not had time to complete that and there were neighbor concerns that they want to address. They are requesting to be moved to the March work session and then March night meeting for public hearing.

Mr. Sears commented that the applicant should have to pay to re-advertise for the March meeting.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to allow applicant to move their request to the March meetings and the applicant be responsible for any fees associated with that.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

Ms. Flor Zimmerman said she is a business owner in the city and her husband; Scott Zimmerman is a veteran. She said they have invested over a million dollars in Newnan, in her building, located at Sprayberry Rd. and Jefferson St. She said this will be compromised when they close Sprayberry Rd. and create a dead end. Ms. Zimmerman is concerned they will lose property value and that the dead-end road will bring crime.

Mayor Shepherd asked if Staff could send information to Council regarding the ongoing roadwork at the intersection.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkinsl, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to instruct Staff to gather information so Council has a better understanding of the situation.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

MOTION EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Berta, seconded by Councilman Koritko that we now enter into closed session as allowed by O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4 and pursuant to advice by the City Attorney, for the purpose of discussing legal and that we move, in open session to adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the Mayor or presiding officer to execute an affidavit in compliance with O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4, and that this body ratify the actions of the Council taken in closed session and confirm that the subject matters of the closed session were within exceptions permitted by the open meetings law at 3:46PM.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

RESOLUTION/MAYOR'S AFFIDAVIT FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Berta, seconded by Councilman Koritko to adopt the resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the affidavit stating that the subject matter of the closed portion of the Council was within the exceptions provided by O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4(b).

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

SIMERLEY CLAIM

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Koritko to deny the claim as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

BLACKMON CLAIM

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Koritko to deny the claim as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilman Koritko to adjourn the Council meeting at 3:47pm.

**MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)**

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Megan Shea, City Clerk

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James Shepherd, Mayor