CITY OF NEWNAN, GEORGIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 16, 2026

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 6:30p.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, Dustin Koritko and Paul Guillaume. Also present: Assistant City Manager, Hasco Craver; Assistant City Manager, Meg Kelsey, City Clerk, Megan Shea and City Attorney, Brad Sears. Absent: City Manager, Cleatus Phillips.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Shepherd called the meeting to order. Pastor Ken Adams with Crossroads Church in Newnan delivered the invocation.

READING OF MINUTES

A. Minutes from the Regular Meeting on May 26, 2026

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting on May 26, 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. 2 Appointments – Convention Center Authority, 3-year terms

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Koritko to reappoint Teresa Lovett for another term.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Berta, seconded by Councilman Koritko to reappoint Parks Avery for another term.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

D. 1 Appointment – Cultural Arts Commission, 3-year term

Councilman Koritko said that Nora Ann Wood is stepping down from the commission. He asked that a thank you letter be sent to her and that this opening be placed on the next agenda.

E. 1 Appointment – Development Authority, 4-year term

Councilwoman Jenkins asked that a thank you letter be sent to Tamarkus Cook for his service.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to appoint Pierre Whatley to the Development Authority.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

F. 2 Appointments – Keep Newnan Beautiful, 3-year terms

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Koritko to re-appoint Allison Ziegler for another term.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked that a thank you letter be sent to Phyllis Graham for her service.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Berta, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to appoint Constance Jordan to Keep Newnan Beautiful.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

G. 1 Appointment – Tree & Parks Commission, 3-year term

Continue to next agenda.

REPORTS ON OPERATIONS BY CITY MANAGER

None.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR

Mayor Shepherd reminded everyone to go vote. He also thanked staff and Council for the Work Session that was held at the Fire Training Facility regarding the Comprehensive Plan update.

NEW BUSINESS

H. Consideration of First Amendment of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Newnan and Explore Newnan-Coweta, Inc. regarding health insurance and benefits

Ms. Kelsey said that the current agreement with Explore Newnan-Coweta, Inc. is set to expire in September. They have asked us to continue that agreement where the City offers health insurance and other benefits to the employees of Explore Newnan-Coweta, Inc. (ENCI). The extension would be one year with automatic renewals for the next 5 years.

Mayor Shepherd asked to clarify that there are no net costs to the city for this, and Ms. Kelsey stated no, they pay the full cobra rate.

Motion by Councilwoman Morrison, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to accept the amendment to the intergovernmental agreement as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

I. Consideration of Request from Coweta County Board of Commissioners to designate two parking spaces on south Court Square for Coweta County Probate Court personnel

Mr. Craver said that historically they put out a cone in one space and are now asking for two spaces.

Councilman Guillaume asked how long have they been doing this? Mr. Craver said this is the first formal ask for this, they have been doing it for a few years, and it does not interrupt day-to-day business. Mayor Pro Tem Berta commented that it is good practice to support the judges.

Motion by Councilwoman Morrison, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

J. Consideration of adjustment to fees for Greenville Street Park rentals, following facility improvements

Brent Snodgrass, Leisure Services Director, explained that since $1.28 million was invested in enhancements at Greenville Street Park, the value of the park has improved. The fees suggested are in line with venues of similar sizes and still comparable with other city facilities.

Councilman Koritko asked times frames on rentals and the security deposit amount. Mr. Snodgrass said all facilities can be rented from 9am-9pm and the security deposit is also in line with other facilities, except for the Wadsworth Auditorium. Councilwoman Jenkins asked when the work at the park would be done? Mr. Craver said it should be done before summer is over.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the adjustment to fees as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

K. Presentation from Nichols Cauley of the Audited 2025 Financial Statements

Ms. Kelsey introduced Greg Chapman with Nichols Cauley.

Mr. Greg Chapman, partner with Nichols Cauley, presented the 2025 Audit results. He said they delivered an unmodified “clean” opinion, and all financial statements were presented fairly in accordance with GAAP. There was a single audit required due to ARPA funds.

For 2024, the city went above and beyond the minimum requirements for an Annual Comprehensive Financial Report which allows for more transparency. The city received a certificate for achievement in financial reporting from this report and this was the first year they received recognition for that.

The firm provided a letter to Council with required communications and there were no disagreements with management or difficulties encountered during the audit and no uncorrected misstatements.

Mr. Chapman gave an overview of financial highlights for 2025, including general fund revenues and expenditures, general fund balance and key accomplishments.

No action needed.

L. Presentation of East Street Analysis of Street Network prepared by Infrastructure Management Services (IMS)

Michael Klahr, City Engineer, said this was to give an overview of the pavement analysis that was conducted. He explained how the data is collected, using 3-D scanning, going block by block. This will allow paving to be budgeted for 5 years out. He gave an overview of the East Street program and all the data that was collected for each street.

Mr. Klahr then showed an interactive map that shows the streets on a map and then will zoom in to the different cracks and problems in the roads. Mayor Shepherd asked if there were any surprises that Mr. Klahr saw in the data? Mr. Klahr said when McIntosh Parkway was built there was different technology used and even after 10 years that road still shows excellent condition.

No action needed.

M. Consideration of List of Streets Proposed for Maintenance under the Local Road Assistance Administration Grant (LRA)

Mr. Klahr explained this is a grant for $608,547.40 and there’s no match. Streets were selected based on the data just shown in Item L. Streets include SummerGrove Parkway from bridge approach to Lower Fayetteville Rd., Stillwood Dr. from Newnan Crossing Blvd E to Southwind Cir. and Windy Trail from Stillwood Dr. to Southwind Ln. This is year 1 in the 5-year plan that was laid out from the data.

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to approve the list of streets as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

N. Consideration of Requests from Newnan Utilities pertaining to three properties

Mr. Jeff Phillips, Newnan Utilities General Manager, said there are three properties to consider. The first is Millard Farmer Industrial Blvd (the Bypass) where there is a sewer lift station that has been there for decades. The Crain Family reached out and offered to donate the 2.2 acres that surround the lift station. Newnan Utilities accepted the donation of the land and ask Council to ratify that.

The second property is a water shed area on the west side of the county, 363 acres, with two reservoirs fed by Brown Creek and Sandy Creek. There was an opportunity to purchase a 14.78 acre neighboring property. This will provide better access to the water shed area. Newnan Utilities purchased it and would deed it into the city.

The third property is on the west side of the county, off Franklin Highway, where there is a compost site. In the northwest corner of that property there is a switching substation and Georgia Transmission has requested an easement for a transmission line, to run parallel to an existing transmission line. The line would be 150 ft wide and run from the Dresden Substation (northwest corner of the compost site) to Talbot County, Georgia. The appraisal is for $229,000 and GA Transmission has agreed to pay that for the easement.

Mayor Shepherd asked if the easement would affect any development in that area? Mr. Phillips said it would not, the compost operation can continue.

City Attorney said that since the last property was paid for with Water & Light funds, not taxpayer money, so the motion needs to specify that the proceeds will go to Water & Light.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to approve the three requests with the proceeds for the easement going to Water & Light.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

O. Consideration of an Amendment to an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Downtown Development Authority and the City of Newnan pertaining to 57 East Broad Project

Mr. Craver explained that the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) discussed 4 documents at their last meeting. These included Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Newnan, Earnest Money Escrow Agreement with Red Hills, Development Agreement with CDI and Lease Amendment. The DDA approved all the proposed amendments. For Council's consideration is the Intergovernmental Agreement between the city and DDA.

Mayor Shepherd asked if Mr. Craver could walk through the $2.4 million and the change in the amendment. Mr. Craver said originally City Council created an economic development deal for the 57 East Project that involved using the DDA. The original agreements have been split and now the DDA would work directly with CDI as the master developer and directly with Red Hills as the hotel developer.

Council asked questions regarding financial risk and liabilities and discussed scenarios involving the hotel backing out of the project. Councilman Thomasson expressed concerns about changing the original agreement, as he felt that was simpler. Councilwoman Jenkins suggested a separate work session to discuss this with all parties.

Mr. Tom Crymes with CDI addressed Council. He said that CDI's goal is to be assured of payment. One sentence changed in the agreement allows for CDI to move forward while the bond is being finalized and issued. It's where the money comes from not the value of the money.

Councilman Thomasson suggested selling Red Hills the 0.67 acres contingent on them honoring the deal with CDI on the 2.4. Councilman Guillaume commented that Red Hills has created doubt and asked for clarification as to what Red Hills was trying to accomplish. Mr. Crymes said they have acted on all their commitments and have been trying to move things forward, such as purchasing the County property to ensure the hotel had parking.

Mr. Sears said this was a 3-party agreement and the agreement did not allow the DDA to go to another hotel developer, that is one of the proposed changes. He further stated that Red Hills has an agreement with Marriott for the hotel, guaranteeing that the infrastructure is in place. These changes allow Mr. Crymes to move forward with the infrastructure so that Red Hills will close on the bonds.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta said this is a smart solution, to allow the project to move forward. It changes timing but not the deal overall. Councilman Thomasson expressed concerns if things do not go right. Mr. Sears said that Red Hills did agree to a $300,000 letter of credit, where if they back out of the deal and don't issue the bond, and it is not for a legal reason that credit is returned to the city.

Mr. Casey Smith, Chairman of the Downtown Development Authority addressed Council. He said this was a project that the city brought to the DDA and they have spent a lot of time discussing this project and voted at their last meeting so that this project can go forward. There is risk with anything, but the DDA believes this project is a game changer for the city.

Mayor Shepherd wanted to confirm that no payment obligations were being added to the city? Mr. Sears stated there are no payment obligations, there is a potential to recover less money.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to hold a work session to discuss these amendments. Opposed: Guillaume, Koritko, Berta, Morrison.

MOTION FAILED. (3-4)

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to approve the amendments as presented. Opposed: Jenkins, Thomasson.

MOTION CARRIED. (5-2)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

P. Presentation from WLA Studio for Draft Arboretum Master Plan

Ms. Liz Solomon with WLA Studio, presented a consolidated master plan after meeting with a stakeholder group and having public input sessions. She explained the origin of the project and proposed location, south of the city's public works facility and Ruth Hill Elementary. An arboretum is not just a park, but rather a collection of trees with a scientific purpose, with an organization to oversee and manage the collection.

Ms. Solomon showed examples of common elements such as types of trees, surfaces and amenities. They looked at how the LINC could move through the site and improve water quality of the dammed-up stream that exists. She showed 3 different approaches to the concept design and what was liked and not liked about each.

For public input they sent out a survey and attended a Market Day. Another event was planned for Willie Pritchett Day but that was cancelled. Overall, the support was positive. Keywords that came up were public green spaces, parks, access to nature and family friendly spaces. There was also interest in edible and medicinal plants and educational components.

Ms. Solomon showed a rendering of the consolidated master plan. Key takeaways included having 3 gateways, all major components would be ADA accessible and different trail services. There was discussion about getting input from the neighbors adjacent to the proposed location. Ms. Solomon said they would be open to coming back again to talk with those neighbors. Councilwoman Jenkins gave suggestions of other ways to reach out to those neighbors.

Mayor Shepherd asked about levels of E. Coli that had been found in one water test but not another. Ms. Solomon explained that there were elevated levels of E. Coli found in the first water test and they went out and re-tested and the levels were much lower. Water testing and monitoring should continue but the first result was thought to be an anomaly. Then there was discussion about uses for the arboretum and concerns that the community wants more places they can gather and have events and an arboretum would not be ideal for those types of uses. Councilwoman Jenkins asked if part of the space could be for gatherings?

Ms. Kelsey commented that this is still just conceptual and these are not set plans. Staff wants to apply for the state stewardship grant and continue to work on set plans for the site. There was discussion about the staffing needs and yearly costs.

No action needed.

VISITORS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS & COMPLAINTS

Q. Request to Reschedule Porchfest to August 22, 2026

Ms. Melody Kiser, organizer for Porchfest, explained that the event was postponed on May 30th due to severe weather and safety concerns. They are requesting to have the event on August 22nd. Mr. Craver stated that this would also include the other plans that had been approved for First Baptist Church and the downtown businesses related to this event. Council acknowledged that the approval would include all previous plans.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to approve the requested date change as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

R. Request from Joe Wright with Throttle Junkies for street closures on April 3, 2027 from 11am-7pm for Spring Rally

Mayor Shepherd stated that Mr. Wright reached out and asked to change the date to April 10th, so it does not interfere with Market Day.

Mr. Wright stated that the request is to shut down North and South Court Squares and the inside lanes of Jefferson St. and Jackson St. between Madison St. and South Court Sq. He said they are expecting 3,500-4,000 people. They raised $20,000 at their event in March and have given back $20,000 to date this year, to service dogs for veterans.

Chief Blankenship said he had spoken to Mr. Wright, and they had a meeting scheduled but then Mr. Wright was not able to attend. He expressed safety concerns and said he wanted to sit down and discuss this further with Mr. Wright. Mayor Shepherd suggested tabling this item until they can meet, so that public safety can give an opinion to Council.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Guillaume to table this item until the next meeting on July 21st.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

S. Request from Jimmie Duffie to close Perry St. between E. Broad St. and Spring St. on July 4th from 8am-4pm for craft vendors

Mr. Craver wanted Council to be aware that there are several other events with street closures already approved on July 4th, including the parade, Market Day, Craft & Brews market and fireworks. He said he spoke with Chief Blankenship, and all police officers are likely touching one of those events.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked if this event could be moved into the parking lot on Perry St.? Mr. Craver said yes that would be less of a challenge. Council expressed concerns about the strain on resources with all the other events already planned.

Motion by Mayor Shepherd, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to deny the request.

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 9:21PM.

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)

PIFER CLAIM

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

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mayor Shepherd, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to adjourn the meeting at 9:25pm.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Megan Shea, City Clerk

James Shepherd, Mayor