

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester  
City Council Regular Meeting  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Monday, March 3, 2025  
Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

**Attendees:** Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.  
Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1  
Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2  
Councilman Mark Giddens, Ward 3  
Mayor Pro-Tem Councilman Earnest Carter, Jr., Ward 4  
City Manager Chris Davis  
Assistant City Manager Richie Childers  
Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris  
City Attorney Lester Castellow.  
City Clerk Markesha Bivens

**Call to Order:** Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

**Invocation/Pledge:** Dr. Willie Mae Marlin

**Agenda Amendment/Approval**

Upon motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the Council Meeting Agenda gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Minutes Approval**

Upon joint motion by Councilmen Carter and Powell, seconded by Councilmen Giddens, the February 17, 2025 – Regular Meeting minutes gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Speakers Appearance**

Mrs. Jean Brooks, Peanut Festival Committee Chair, thanked the City of Sylvester for the continued support of the annual event and emphasized that without the monetary support and employee assistance, each year, the Peanut Festival and Parade would not be as successful. She also discussed the importance of helping and that the committee is always seeking volunteers.

Mr. Demar Milton, Sylvester Resident and Property owner, advised he would like to gift two (2) acres of land for a park on South Henderson Street. This was named as the old gin location, further researched as parcel numbers: SV070167 and SV070168, near West Railroad Street.

## **Presentations**

### **A. 3G's Auction Company**

Mr. Todd Spence of 3-G's Auction Company, presented the Mayor, Council and the City of Sylvester with the final results of the surplus auction held February 8, 2025. With a good crowd, the sale exceeded expectations with a total of \$94,623.30, and all items placed for auction sold. Much appreciation went to the city staff for their dedication and preparation of the auction items.

### **B. Georgia Department of Community Affairs**

Mrs. Heather Sharpe, Region 10 Representative of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), presented the Mayor and City Council with a commemorative big check. This check is for the Rural Workforce Housing Initiative Grant, presented at the recent OneGeorgia Day at the Capital.

### **C. Excellence Standard in Planning South West Georgia Regional Commission**

Mrs. Susanne Angell, Executive Director, with Mr. Olukayode Olubowale, Senior Planner of the South West Georgia Regional Commission, were in attendance to present a certificate for the Excellence Standard in Planning. This designation is for meeting and exceeding the performance standards of all qualified local governments in the region.

### **D. Sylvester Fire Department**

Mr. Frank Flanigan, Fire Science Department Chair and Training Officer at Albany Technical College, proudly recognized two (2) students/Sylvester Firefighters, for their participation in a recent firefighting competition: Mr. Waylon Anderson placed first place and Mr. Cody Humphrey placed second at Skills USA in Atlanta, GA. Certificates were given for their hard work and dedication, with the relationship formed for training and recruitment with Albany Tech for quality firefighter candidates for Sylvester also mentioned.

## **New Business**

### **A. Best Friends Humane Society Pickle Ball Fundraiser**

Mrs. Molly Bridges, Fundraiser Chair for the Best Friends Humane Society, approached the Mayor and Council with the request to use the Jeffords Park Pickle Ball Courts on May 4, 2025, from 8 am to 2 pm. Waiving fees for non-profits, granting public access, other events and remaining consistent were all discussed.

Upon a motion by Councilmen Giddens and Jackson, together with a second by Councilman Carter, the request to use Jeffords Park for the Pickle Ball Courts by Best Friends gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

### **B. Event Application: Night of Worship – Warriors of Faith**

Mrs. Glenice Stephens, Community Development Director and Mrs. Brittany Martin gave details on the Night of Worship – Warriors of Faith event to be held April 4, 2025, from 6 pm until 9 pm. This will be a Christian worship concert for the motorcyclists involved in the automobile accident on February 7, 2025.

Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, with a second by Councilmen Giddens and Powell, combined, the event application for the Night of Worship – Warriors of Faith event gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**C. Beer, Wine and Alcohol License Application: Spirit Tap & Play**

Mrs. Tenneisha Cushion, Deputy City Clerk, summarized the new application for Spirit Tap & Play, due to a change in applicant. Staff is seeking approval for this business to serve beer, wine and distilled spirits for the year 2025. Additionally, a business license has been granted for amusement-arcade games, from the Community Development Department.

Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, with a second by Councilman Powell, the Beer, Wine and Alcohol License Application for Spirit Tap & Play gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**D. City Employee Personal Time Off (PTO)**

Mr. Davis provided details of the policy and procedure change to the City of Sylvester Employee annual and sick time. With researching the best option for employees, the Human Resource Department has configured a formula to ensure there is no loss of time and a smooth transition combining both annual and sick leave. Employees will have a 480-hour cap; where, if more time is accrued, those employees will have a bank, and be paid out in full when employment ends. Once the time is distributed, it will be replenished as normal. The mention of actual sick versus personal time and usage of best judgement by Department Heads was briefly discussed, along with medical excuses after two (2) days and vacation time, ensuring coverage in that department.

Upon a motion by Councilman Giddens, with a second by Councilman Jackson, the proposed change to City Employee's Personal Time Off (PTO) gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Reports/Remarks**

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell inquired about the planning and timeframe for Camp Sylvester Summer Program to review a price increase, as discussed with Program Director Felecia Baisden. With a request for updates on the West Street Project, LMIG Paving and with new housing developments in the future, sidewalks are a major concern. Mention of smart meter costs and quotes for installation, along with billing cycle additional days, water leak reporting and high bill usage will also allow real-time tracking. Councilman Powell also suggested a town hall meeting for citizen updates, prizes and question and an answer opportunity for the public.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson had no report.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens reported the good job of Public Works with cleaning up the brush in the alleys and overhead branches in Ward 3.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter reported the SlyTel Broadband Service at his home buffers and needs troubleshooting, besides powering off the unit. He has reached out to the department concerning this issue, and also inquired about the rebranding/remarketing status of SlyTel by the outside company, approved by the city council, to complete the strategy.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor summarized the art gallery discussion, brought forth by Mr. Aubrey Vance, in a past council meeting. He stated more information is required and saw no harm in admiring art, if it would be no cost to the city.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis informed the staffing changes last year postponed the West Street Project, LMIG and other grant projects and, with staff gaining proper certification, these projects will be underway soon and agreed the housing phases have been approved and will include sidewalks. He informed that the SlyTel Broadband Service decision was not brought before the council, and an update should have been provided. He reminded that CPR Training will take place March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. If the council is interested, the class times were sent via email. The four-way stop at E. Price and N. Westberry will need signatures and/or a survey to move forward; and the Mayor and Council agreed unanimously.

#### **Additional Comments**

Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris informed that the rebranding by Evergreen Solutions did not take place. Staff felt it was best for in-house marketing improvements, as a next step for cost saving for SlyTel and the plan should have been revisited.

Community Development Director Mrs. Glenice Stephens mentioned two (2) Community Transformation Plan Meetings advertised, similar to a town hall, and invited the panel and public to attend, Monday, March 10, 2025, at 9 am and 6 pm. In an effort to address citizen concerns, a survey is available via Facebook, the city's website or by informational flyer, for residents to participate.

#### **Executive Session**

Councilman Jackson moved to convene an Executive Session to discuss personnel, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Executive Session: 7:01 p.m.**

**Regular Session Reconvened: 7:32 p.m.**

#### **Announcements**

Councilman Giddens motioned to accept minutes as read in Executive Session and reconvene, seconded by Councilmen Carter and Jackson, in unison. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the request not to amend the Fiscal Year Budget 2025, by request of increase by the Sylvester-Worth County Chamber, was approved. Voting yes were Councilmen Giddens, Jackson and Powell. Voting no was none. Mayor Proctor and Councilman Carter abstained/recused. The vote passed 3-0-2.

Additionally, upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Powell, the creation of a resolution to relieve the Municipal Court Judge of her duties, with 60 day notice, gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Adjournment**

With all agenda items covered, Councilman Giddens motioned to adjourn, with a second by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL  
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

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HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

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MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK