

## City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester  
City Council Regular Meeting  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Monday, May 19, 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  
City Attorney Lester Castellow  
City Clerk Markesha Bivens

**Absent:** Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris

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

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

### **Agenda Amendment/Approval**

With a request by Mayor Proctor to add an Executive Session for Litigation and Real Estate, upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, 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 motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the April 21, 2025 – Regular Meeting minutes gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

**Speakers Appearance:** None

### **Old Business - Camp Sylvester 2025**

Ms. Felecia Baisden, Camp Sylvester Director, informed Mayor and Council to ensure the city can continue delivering the same quality and service for camp, there needs to be an adjustment to the fee, as discussed in previous council meetings. Historically, the fee was \$45 for the summer. However, with research of neighboring communities, child care facilities, and vouchers available from Peach State Health Plan, staff recommended to increase the cost to \$35/week. This amount was unanimously approved by the Mayor and Council by survey. Payment tracking, guidelines and dates were discussed.

## New Business

### A. Ordinance 2025-02: Flood Damage Prevention Amendment

Mrs. Glenice Stephens, Community Development Director, spoke before the Mayor and Council concerning the ordinance amendment to the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Flood maps have been updated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Program, effective August 19, 2025. The current flood ordinance was also reviewed with the following recommendations: Amend and replace the definition of *building* with the definition of ***structure***, add the definition of ***Manufactured Home Park or Subdivision*** and amend the definition of ***elevated building***. This will allow the city to be consistent with the definitions of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, Ordinance No. 2025-02: Flood Damage Prevention Amendment gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

### B. Flock Safety Camera Update

Mr. Chris Davis, City Manager, provided statistics from the Sylvester Police Department, regarding Flock Safety Cameras throughout the city. These cameras capture a vehicle's license plate and alert law enforcement with evidence relating to wanted vehicles, suspended registration, and no insurance, for safer communities. Sylvester Police Department Lieutenant Carlos Deriso advised the city is in the permitting process for additional cameras with various functions and the ability to share information with nearby agencies for assistance. There was no action taken on this agenda item.

### C. Discussion: Best Friends Humane Society Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Mr. Davis provided details to the Mayor and Council regarding the Best Friends Humane Society (BFHS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Mr. Jason Orr, President of BFHS was present for questions and comments. The responsibility of BFHS, Sylvester Police Department and Code Enforcement, city ordinances and mention of housing poultry, capture of livestock, cats and dogs, community concerns with response time/issuing citations were all discussed.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Carter, the authorization and execution of the BFHS MOU by Mayor Proctor 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 expressed concern about the paving schedule, with mowing season approaching, and inquired about the Senior Citizen Center's additional day and requested contracts be placed in the agenda packet for review of any changes before the meeting. He also congratulated Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris, on her graduation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Master's Degree.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson informed of loud music at all hours of the night/early morning in Ward 2. The police will be called again for citations/next steps; noting the success of speed bumps on West Pinson Street, however, there are reports of speeding on Carrol Lane near Learning Tree Daycare, needing research. Confirmed the Sowega Council on Aging allows meals to senior citizens five (5) days per week, which may have changed since the COVID pandemic.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens reported of brush and tree removal needed near the State Route 112 (Ashburn Highway) and State Route 33 (Cordele Rd) intersection. Regarding the public contacting the council, he utilizes the City Clerk with no problems.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter proposed the city revisit a \$75 credit to electric customers, as was done in the past, for both residential and commercial account, in November if possible; with reports of heavy traffic on Hudson Street and overnight parking in the road, he requests a heavier police presence to review and issue citations for no parking (no curbs on street), impeding traffic and to move vehicles. He mentioned the additional senior citizen day as a positive note but clarity is needed for the Sowega Council on Aging feeding seniors for five (5) days, where the city would not need to do so, and requested Attorney Castellow to review, noting 2023, and the city's conflict in feeding the seniors for the additional day; regarding Slytel Broadband Service, it was mentioned that higher customer enrollment numbers are needed to ensure a return on investment. Discussion of proper protocol of providing city council phone numbers to the public took place.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor shared thoughts on the protocol for public concern and city council contact information. A recent incident occurred where City Hall should have been the first line of contact. While there is no issue with citizens having the council's contact information, each situation is different.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow has no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis stated the practice of public concern is on a case-by-case basis. If citizens contact City Hall and the City Manager is able to handle the problem instantly, it saves time providing a citizen solution. He also reminded of City Hall being closed for Memorial Day Observance, May 26, 2025.

## **Executive Session**

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

## **Executive Session Begins: 6:44 p.m.**

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

**Regular Session Reconvenes: 7:29 p.m.**

**Announcements:** None

**Adjournment**

With all agenda items covered, Councilman Jackson 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 7:29 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL  
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

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HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

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MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK