

## City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester  
City Council Regular Meeting  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Monday, August 4, 2025  
Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

**Attendees:** Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.  
Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1  
Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 (via phone)  
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**

Upon a motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the council meeting agenda was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

### **Minutes' Approval**

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Carter, the June 2, 2025 – Regular Meeting, June 12, 2025 – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Workshop and Public Hearing, and Jun 16, 2025 - Regular Meeting, Budget Workshop and Public Hearing Minutes gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

**Speakers Appearance:** There were no comments from the public.

### **Presentation**

#### **Sylvester Municipal Airport GDOT Award**

City Manager Chris Davis provided details of the Municipal Airport GDOT Award, presented to the City of Sylvester. At the 2025 GDOT Aviation Program Forum, from over one hundred organizations, Sylvester and two (2) other municipalities received recognition, for dedication and continued support in sponsorship.

## **Public Hearing**

### **CDBG Project Close Out – *Called to Order at 6:04 p.m.***

With proper notice of date and time advised, and public notice requirements satisfied, City Clerk Markesha Bivens stated the purpose of the public hearing is to inform citizens of the close out of the Northwest Sewer System Rehabilitation Project. This project benefits 147 residents and the final quarterly report is available along with the accomplishments of Bob Roberson & Associates, Doyle Hancock and Sons and Carter and Sloope Engineering. The project completion date was July 21, 2025.

**Public Comment** - There was no public comment.

**Remarks** - There were no remarks.

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, with second by Councilman Carter, the Public Hearing adjourned. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

**The Public Hearing adjourned at 6:06 p.m.**

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Worth County Ram Alumni Reunion Events**

City Manager Chris Davis reminded the panel of the previous request for the Worth County Ram Alumni Reunion (WCRAR) group to develop a security plan for their requested events in October and revisit the event applications at the August 4, 2025, City Council Meeting.

Mr. Davis cited the increased participation of the events, and with staff recommendation, encouraged the relocation of the Friday Night Meet and Greet and all other events to be held at the J.W. Holley Gym Grounds and the Henry Hall Woolard Center, in the same manner as ion as the city's annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Concert and Fireworks Celebration. With the size of the facility, ball fields, and grounds for parking, this would be an appropriate location, considering public protection and outgrowing downtown Sylvester and Pedestrian Mall.

To ensure the safety of all attendees and all residents, with recommendations provided to the Mayor, Council and WCRAR President Jarvis Jefferson, further discussion took place. Officer shortage and security details by Captain Rhonda Carter of the Worth County Sheriff's Office were heard, mention of lighting, crowd control, and overall residents' well-being. Mr. Jefferson will consult with the WCRAR Board to determine next steps, with no action taken on this agenda item.

## **New Business**

### **A. Event/Request to Close Street Application: Swine Festival 2025**

Mrs. Karen Singletary, Main Street Director, approached the Mayor and Council with a request to close street and event application for the annual Swine Festival. This event, to take place August 22 - 23, 2025, will have the Ryan West Concert Friday Night, food vendors, and BBQ Cook Off Saturday, ending at 2 pm.

Radio stations have been promoting Swine Fest at no cost and will be contacted for the correct dates. For this event, Mrs. Singletary requested Front Street between Main Street and Isabella Street to be closed.

Upon a motion by Councilman Giddens, with a second by Councilman Carter, the request to hold the Swine Festival 2025 BBQ Cook-off and close the above-mentioned streets gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

**B. 90-Day Moratorium for Convenience Stores with/without Gas**

Mrs. Glenice Stephens, Community Development Director, informed the panel that there has been an increase in inquiries about convenience stores in the city. There are currently six (6) located on Franklin Street; one under construction and one undergoing renovation at the former location of Factory Connection and one each on N. Main, S. Main, and E. MLK Streets. Research shows that other communities are experiencing this ongoing issue and there are currently ten (10) moratoriums in place for their use.

With further discussion, staff requests a 90-day moratorium to develop an ordinance to regulate requirements for convenience stores.

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, and seconded by Councilman Giddens, the request for a 90-day moratorium for convenience stores with or without gas gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

**C. GDOT Aviation Grant Funds for 2025-2026 Airport Project**

Mr. Davis informed the Mayor and Council of an aviation grant for 2025-2026 that was approved, with a 25% match in funding, to go toward future development at the Sylvester Municipal Airport. An automated weather observing system (AWOS) for real-time updates at departure and revising the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) was mentioned, with more details to follow. Staff recommended Mayor Proctor to execute the letter to GDOT, confirming the city's intent to proceed with the projects.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Powell, permission for Mayor Proctor to execute the letter to GDOT for Aviation Grant Funds for 2025-2026 gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

**D. Sylvester-Worth County Chamber Line Dance Request**

Mr. Davis addressed the Mayor and City Council on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce to request use of the Train Depot for upcoming line dance classes. He noted that the previous session was well-received and successful, and the Chamber is seeking to utilize the facility once again. The requested dates are two Saturdays, August 9 and September 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. These sessions are intended as preparation for the upcoming *Boots and Pearls* event, scheduled for September 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., to be held at Southern Woods Plantation. Tickets for the event are \$35 per person or \$50 per couple.

Following further discussion, the City Council emphasized that any individual or organization charging admission or fees for an event must pay the applicable rental fee when using a city facility for non-city-sponsored events. Enforcing this policy ensures a consistent and fair procedure for all users, whether private, public, or non-profit.

## **Reports/Remarks**

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell inquired about the status of the stormwater study and review, referencing previous recommendations, considering climate change. He noted that these studies should be conducted every 10–15 years and expressed concerns regarding recurring flooding and vegetation growth in the canal. He also highlighted the need in the past to support residents who experienced property damage in the past. Additionally, he mentioned plans for a town hall meeting in Ward 1.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson commended the Sylvester Police Department for their prompt response and successful capture of a suspect following a high-speed chase. He also expressed his appreciation to the Light Department for addressing streetlight issues throughout Ward 2.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens inquired about the sale of to-go alcoholic beverages by the drink at local restaurants. It was confirmed that there have been no changes to the existing ordinance regarding this matter.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter inquired about the proposed utility rebate for both residential and commercial customers. It was suggested that the rebate be considered for the months of November or December, with a vote scheduled for the next council meeting. The rebate would be issued as bill credit rather than a check, due to previous issues with fraud. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding pine straw and trash accumulation at the stormwater drain entryway on MLK Street. However, Public Works Director Greg Jackson confirmed that the issue had been addressed prior to the meeting.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow referenced a memo previously sent in response to Councilman Carter’s inquiry regarding senior meals and the operations of the SOWEGA Council on Aging and the city’s administrative activity.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis stated that the Best Friends Humane Society has requested to use the Mary Alice Shipp Center on August 25 to host a benefit dinner. It was previously determined that the organization must pay the standard rental fee for use of the facility. Additionally, an attendance count was provided for the *Boots and Pearls* event.

**Executive Session**

Councilman Giddens moved to convene an Executive Session to discuss litigation and real estate matters. Councilman Carter seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Jackson, Carter, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

**Executive Session Begins: 6:55 p.m.**

Councilman Powell motioned to accept the minutes as read from the Executive Session and to reconvene into the regular session. Councilman Giddens seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Jackson, Carter, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

**Regular Session Reconvenes: 7:45 p.m.****Announcements**

With motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Carter, the city council approved the contract to purchase the SlyTel Broadband System. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

**Adjournment**

With all agenda items addressed, Councilman Powell motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilmen Carter and Giddens jointly seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL  
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

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HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

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MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK