

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Tuesday, September 2, 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 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: City Manager Chris Davis

Agenda

With a request to remove New Business, Item B: Carter & Sloope Engineering Bid Update, Councilman Jackson motioned to approve the amended council meeting agenda. Councilman Powell seconded the motion. 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 Jackson, the June 26, 2025, Fiscal Year Budget Public Hearing and Adoption Meeting and July 20, 2025 – Regular Meeting Minutes gained approval. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

Speakers Appearance – There were no comments from the public.

New Business:

A. Cancer Awareness 365 – Ms. Sharon Lyles

Ms. Sharon Lyles addressed the City Council regarding the upcoming Pink Out Day event. She reminded the Council of her appearance in March and noted that the event is upcoming. Following further discussion, staff requested directions regarding the donation amount for this year. A contribution of \$5,000 was requested; whereas in previous years, the City contributed \$4,000 toward the event, held annually on the fourth Wednesday of October at the Train Depot.

Councilman Powell made a motion to approve a donation in the amount of \$5,000. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

~~B. Carter & Sloope Engineering Bid Update~~

C. Beer, Wine, Alcohol License Application: Kuntry Boy BBQ

Mrs. Teneisha Cushion, Deputy Clerk, offered details of the beer, wine and alcoholic beverage application submitted by the owner of Kuntry Boy BBQ, 305 West Railroad Street. Staff seeks approval of this application, with all documentation completed and submitted as required.

Upon a motion by Councilman Giddens, with a second by Councilman Powell, Kuntry Boy BBQ's application gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

D. Resolution 2025-10: 5311 Program Authorization

Mr. Childers provided an update to the Mayor and Council regarding the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission and its annual initiative. He explained that, on behalf of the City, the Commission prepares and submits the application for funding under the 5311 Public Transportation Program. This program supports services such as small buses used by citizens for transportation to medical appointments and other essential travel needs.

Councilman Jackson made a motion to approve the 5311 Program Authorization, Resolution 2025-10. Councilmen Powell and Carter jointly seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

E. Worth County Election Agreement

Mr. Davis informed the Mayor and Council of the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for the 2025 municipal election, which will be conducted by Worth County. The election is scheduled for November 4, 2025, and includes two City of Sylvester positions on the ballot: Mayor and Councilmember for Ward 4. Staff requested approval from the Council for the City Clerk to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

Councilman Jackson motioned to approve the Worth County Election Agreement, with a second by Councilman Carter. The motion was approved unanimously, with votes from Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

F. Discussion: Utility Rebate Options

Mr. Davis provided a response to a previous inquiry from Councilman Carter regarding issuing utility rebates to both residential and commercial customers. The Finance Department gathered calculations, outlining the amounts credited to each customer account and the total fiscal impact on the City's budget. Discussion included a mixture of rebate amounts, and how to apply across multiple billing cycles.

Following the discussion, Councilman Giddens made a motion to approve a \$50 rebate for each utility account. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed with yes votes from Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. Councilman Carter voted in opposition. The motion carried by a vote of 4-1.

Reports/Remarks

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor requested an update on the installation of cameras at the Jeffords Park courts. Staff provided a cost estimate of \$4,750 and emphasized the need for monitoring due to ongoing issues with net damage, trash, and vandalism. Concerns were also discussed regarding a request from Sumner Mayor Todd Spence for assistance in developing Sumner's Police Department. It was noted that the Sheriff's Office declined to assist. City Manager Chris Davis advised that Police Chief Ronald Jackson would provide support in completing the necessary forms for a period of six (6) months. This assistance will be limited to consulting only, with no street patrols, no monetary responsibility, and no conflict with Worth County, while Sumner works to recruit officers and obtain required state permits.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter reported sinking pavement on MLK Street between Isabella and Main Streets. Staff confirmed the area and plan to review pipes on Tuesday morning. An inquiry was made regarding a city-owned floor buffer bearing a former contractor's name. Staff confirmed the equipment is a city purchase, with receipt and does not belong to the contractor. Plans for Pope Park's "Wall of Fame" and historical preservation initiatives were presented; discussion included the importance of regular maintenance and improvements such as the installation of guardrails, stump grinding, and construction of new pavilions.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens inquired about the status of the bush hog repair. Staff reported that one (1) unit is currently out of service, one (1) unit is operational, and two (2) new units are on order, as it was determined that investing in repairs to the existing equipment was not cost-effective.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson referenced the pavilion located at the J.W. Holley Grounds and requested that spraying, along with regular grass and weed maintenance, be conducted. Further discussion regarding the property list submitted by the City Manager for the Land Bank Authority, including matters related to the sale of city-owned property, potential auction processes, the use of sealed bids, and revenue views all took place.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell requested an update regarding the status of streetlights out, within the city. Staff reported that replacement bulbs are currently in back-order status and noted a temporary staffing shortage; however, the matter is being addressed. Additionally, a request was made to post weekly updates on the City's social media platforms regarding the Southwest Regional Transit System to provide public information on available transportation services.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor provided an update regarding the grant application for Pope Park. Staff reported that, unfortunately, the City was not selected for funding. Of the approximately 50,000 applicants, only twenty-five (25) grants were awarded. Staff indicated plans to reapply for various grant opportunities and will continue maintaining the ballpark, lock any gates to discourage vagrancy and other unwanted activities on the property.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis –Mr. Davis reported that upon review of the Parks & Recreation Budget, the proposed Memorial Wall for Pope Park—an initiative suggested by Councilman Carter—may proceed despite the City not receiving the related grant funding. To help offset the cost of the design, plaques recognizing family members who played, coached, or were otherwise affiliated with Pope Park will be made available for purchase. A reminder was also provided for an RSVP for the Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) Roundtable Discussion scheduled for September 24, 2025, at The Palace Restaurant.

Executive Session

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

Executive Session Begins: 6:51 p.m.

Councilman Jackson motioned to accept minutes as read in Executive Session and reconvene, seconded by Councilman Giddens. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

Regular Session Reconvenes: 7:12 p.m.

Announcements: There were no announcements.

Adjournment

With all agenda items addressed, Councilman Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, with a vote of 5-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

ATTEST:

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK