

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Monday, September 15, 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

Mayor Proctor requested the relocation of Item C to the first item of discussion of New Business. Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded jointly by Councilmen Carter and Jackson, the agenda was approved as amended. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

Speakers Appearance – There were no public comments.

Public Hearing

Applicant: City of Sylvester
Zoning Request: Amend Section 2.02, Section 4.21 Article IV of the Zoning Ordinance, and Section 26-77 of Chapter 26

The Public Hearing was called to order, unanimously, at 6:03 p.m.

Community Development Director, Mrs. Glenice Stephens, informed meeting attendees that the purpose of this Public Hearing is to provide criteria to ensure convenience stores/food marts are designed and operated on adequate sites a proper and desirable locations concerning traffic patterns, adjacent land uses, the goals and objectives of the City of Sylvester's Comprehensive Plan and the proliferations of convenience stores/food marts.

Zoning Request details include amending *Section 2.02 Definitions* to remove *Food Mart*, delete *Section 4.21 Article IV* of the Zoning Ordinance, and insert a new Section 4.21 to regulate *Convenience Stores/Food Marts*, Delete *Section 26-77 of Chapter 26* to add a new *Section 26-77- Licensing Requirements*.

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendments.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Mayor and Council Remarks

The Council discussed neighboring communities, the definition of food markets, the number of existing stores with and without gas within the city, a potential future location meeting required criteria, and applicable distance requirements.

Upon motion from Councilman Powell, with second by Councilman Giddens, 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 6:11 p.m.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the Mayor and Council approved the zoning amendments concerning convenience stores and food marts. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

Referencing a 90-day moratorium approved at the August 4, 2025, Council Meeting, for the development of an ordinance to regulate requirements for convenience stores upon motion by Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the lifting of said moratorium was unanimously approved. The motion passed, 5-0.

Unfinished Business

A. Land Bank Property Discussion

City Manager Chris Davis inquired about the review status of the list of seventeen (17) city-owned properties previously provided to the panel. He noted that, if desired, the Council could contribute certain properties to the Worth County Land Bank Authority, in partnership with the City of Poulan, for potential sales to interested individuals. Following discussion, the Council agreed to table the item for further review. No action was taken.

B. Broad Band Purchase Finalization

Mr. Davis provided an update on the purchase of SlyTel Broadband Services. Staff met with representatives from TruVista Fiber of Tifton to review the agreement and conduct a tour of the associated property. The City is awaiting closing terms to finalize the purchase.

New Business

A. Water Treatment Plant Bid Award

Mr. Steven Rakestraw of Carter & Sloope, Inc., Consulting Engineers, addressed the Mayor and City Council with a recommendation regarding the Water Treatment Plant Bid Award. Staff mentioned reviewing the sludge degradation process at a neighboring city and noted bids were received and opened on August 28, 2025, with two (2) bids read aloud. B.A.M. 2, Inc. submitted the lowest base bid, in the amount of \$6,632,148.51 and Carter & Sloope, Inc. reviewed references, project history and state they are qualified to complete the proposed project.

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the Water Treatment Plant Bid was approved and awarded to B.A.M. 2, Inc. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

B. Request to Close Street/Event Applications

a. Unity Baptist Church Community Block Party

b. First Baptist Church Fall Festival

Mrs. Ebony Moore, Community Development Specialist, provided details regarding the submitted event applications. She reported that Unity Baptist Church has requested the use of Gervaise-Lawhorn Park (Duck Pond) on Saturday, October 25, 2025, for its annual Community Block Party. The event is scheduled to take place from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and will feature bouncy houses, food, activities, and Christian music. The event is open to the public.

In addition, First Baptist Church's Annual Fall Festival is scheduled for October 29, 2025, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Event organizers have requested the temporary closure of the streets at the corner of Pope and Washington Streets for the duration of the festival.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the event applications for the Unity Baptist Church Community Block Party and the First Baptist Church Fall Festival Event Applications were approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

C. Sylvester-Worth County Chamber of Commerce

a. 100-Mile Yard Sale

b. Pets and Pals Parade

Mrs. Kayla Myers, President/CEO of the Sylvester-Worth County Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Mayor and Council to provide updates on upcoming community events.

Mrs. Myers announced that the 100-Mile Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This annual event takes place in the rain or shine on the second Saturday in October.

Additionally, Mrs. Myers, in partnership with Mrs. Karen Singeltary, Main Street Director, requested a date change for the Best Friends Humane Society and Peanut Festival Annual Pets and Pals Parade. This event is usually the same week as the Peanut Festival, however, the proposed new date is Friday, October 24, 2025, to be held prior to the Haunted Depot Event. Plans include a fall festival with entertainment and food giveaways beginning at 6:00 p.m. An event application and road closure request was submitted to close Main, Front, Kelly, and Isabella Streets from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the festivities.

Upon a motion by Councilman Carter, with a second by Councilman Giddens, the Request to Close Street Application for the Pets & Pals Parade with Fall Festival was approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

Mrs. Myers also extended invitations to the Mayor and Council to attend the Boots and Pearls Event on September 25, at Southern Woods, with proceeds benefiting local scholarships, and announced the Eggs and Issues Breakfast on November 12, featuring updates and insights from local and state officials.

Reports/Remarks

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens had no report.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter requested canal maintenance behind Powell's Garage on Pope Street. Mention of pipe and street repair on Martin Luther King Drive taking place this week was made, with staff announcing the road closures via web and social media for the public.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell requested an update on equipment. Staff will update during the City Manager's Report.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson also inquired on equipment.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor inquired about the speed detector on U.S. Highway 82 near Short & Paulk Supply Co. He expressed continued concerns regarding traffic safety, speed, and the need for a stronger police presence in the area. Lieutenant Carlos Deriso, Sylvester Police Department (SPD), confirmed the speed detector's location on U.S. Highway 82 is accurate and compliant with radar regulations, and reported that enhanced patrols have been conducted in the area.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis reported that the side-mount mower is currently out of service and is expected to remain down for approximately seven (7) weeks, as the replacement decks are built to order. Demonstrations of equipment used in neighboring communities will be conducted soon to help maintain the mowing schedule throughout the city. He noted that two (2) new six-foot rotary mowers have been delivered, which are expected to reduce overall costs, and the rubber-tire excavator is now operational, offering improved efficiency, strength, and mobility. The Public Works Department expressed satisfaction with the new equipment, and leasing the excavator is anticipated to provide cost savings. Mr. Davis also reported that Martin Luther King Drive will undergo pipe repairs, as a washing has occurred; emergency locates have been obtained, and repairs will begin soon. Additionally, documents regarding 911 services were presented to the Mayor and Council, outlining an annual contract increase to \$1,934 per month. The cost includes two (2) dispatchers, with salaries and benefits totaling over \$40,000 per dispatcher. Staff was requested to research this information further and report back to Council with findings. Discussion was held regarding other municipalities' size and fees for dispatching and Chamber of Commerce membership, as well as previous meetings with the County Manager.

Executive Session – None

Announcements - None

Adjournment

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

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK