

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Tuesday, October 20, 2025
Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.
Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1
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

Absent: Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2

Call to Order: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Invocation/Pledge: City Manager Chris Davis

Agenda

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Carter, the meeting agenda was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The motion carried, 4-0.

Speakers Appearance – There were no comments from the public.

Public Hearing

Applicant: Quail Pines of Sylvester, LLC.
Request: Preliminary Plat Approval
Quail Pines Phase II (56 Lots)

The Public Hearing was called to order, unanimously, at 6:02 p.m.

Community Development Director, Mrs. Glenice Stephens advised the purpose of this Public Hearing is to review and approve the preliminary plat and subdivision application for Quail Pines II. The Mayor and Council will receive public comments on proposed site, located on GA Highway 33 North, covering 45.87 acres. Funding and the rural workforce housing grant \$1.3 million to aid with infrastructure, pump station and streets were discussed, with bid requirements were all mentioned. Landowner Mr. Ray Dupree was present to answer questions.

City staff reviewed the preliminary plat, with all required documentation provided to the panel prior to the public hearing. A checklist for Quail Pines II was presented, confirming compliance with required criteria, inclusion of approved water and sewer extension letters, and Planning Commission comments.

All advertising and public notice requirements were met. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed preliminary plat for 56 homes.

Mayor and Council Remarks

The Council discussed the housing market, Phase I timeline for approximately 10 homes, the completion schedule for Phase II, One Georgia Authority home pricing, grant conditions, energy-efficient housing, city utilities, and bid obligations.

Public Comment

Ms. Shelia Williams, a Sylvester resident, expressed concerns regarding the addition of more homes to the community, stating that additional job opportunities are needed as well.

With no further discussion, upon motion from Councilman Powell, with second by Councilman Giddens, the Public Hearing adjourned. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The motion passed, 4-0.

The Public Hearing adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Carter, the preliminary plat for Phase II of Quail Pines gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The motion passed, 4-0.

New Business:

A. Request to Close Street Application/Parade Permit

Community Development Specialist Mrs. Ebony Moore advised the Council that retroactive approval is required for the recent Annual Worth County Homecoming Parade, which took place on October 17, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Mrs. Moore confirmed that staff will implement a corrective measure to ensure all necessary documentation is in place and approval is secured prior to the event next year.

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Carter, the event application was approved for Worth County Homecoming Parade, retroactively. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The motion passed, 4-0.

B. Surplus Property

Mr. Davis advised the Mayor and Council that staff has received inquiries from two (2) citizens interested in purchasing specific city-owned properties. If the Council provides authorization, the properties will be offered via a sealed bid process, following mandatory advertising in the local newspaper.

The first property is a vacant/corner lot at the Madison and West Franklin Streets. The second property is at the corner of West Street and Albany Avenue. The prospective bidders are aware of the bid process.

Upon motion by Councilman Carter, with a second by Councilman Giddens, the abovementioned surplus property gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

C. Millage Rate

Mr. Davis reported that staff recently attended a Millage Rate meeting at the Worth County Courthouse with the county and each municipality, Poulan, Sumner and Warwick. Due to the ongoing property revaluation and citizen appeal process, the final numbers for the tax digest are not yet available and will not be until April or May of 2026. The county has encouraged other municipalities to set a millage rate based upon estimated numbers, so there is no delay in tax bills being mailed.

The City of Sylvester currently has about \$33 million dollars in appeals and being a full-service city, could continue to wait until the process completes next year, however, this is not the best option for Worth County. After further consideration, in hopes of offsetting a significant increase in property tax, based on 30% estimate, staff is anticipating setting the largest rollback in city history, by 7 mills, with a millage rate of 6.177.

Upon motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Giddens, a motion to set a proposed rollback in millage rate was approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

The City Council was reminded that any increase in the millage rate would require three (3) public hearings and proper public notice and advertisement placed in both the local newspaper and on the City's website. Dates will be determined in the future.

Reports/Remarks

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor noted an increase in the use of motorized transportation within the city, including skateboards, scooters, and bicycles, and inquired whether there had been an increase in reports to the Police Department. Lieutenant Carlos Deariso of the Sylvester Police Department reported that there has been no uptick in related calls. He stated that officers will continue to address any unsafe activity or equipment issues, such as lack of visible lights, to ensure public safety. He also noted Pope Park looked great for the Peanut Festival Parade line up and hopes it looks good all the time.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell had no report.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter expressed appreciation to the Public Works Department for their recent ditch maintenance work behind Powell's Garage on Pope Street and at Pope Park. He noted the importance of maintaining the appearance of Pope Park, particularly given its historical significance and the fact that Worth County High School no longer utilizes the field. It was noted that vehicles have been parked overnight on Worth Street. Additionally, the "No Parking" sign near the property has been turned backward and requires repair or replacement.

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

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson was absent.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis commended staff for a successful Peanut Festival, noting the strong participation of vendors, parade entries, and attendees, as well as the well-maintained park and absence of public safety issues. He reminded the Council of upcoming events: the Pink Out Cancer Event on Wednesday, October 22 at 12:00 p.m.; and the Haunted Depot, in partnership with the Pets & Pals Parade and Fall Festival, on Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25. Mr. Davis also discussed quotes received for Pope Park shelters, trashcans, and Memorial Wall pricing. He reported that the West Street Project update and application for reinstatement have been approved. The South Pond dredging project has begun, and staff addressed a complaint regarding the large machinery operated by B.A.M.2. A public notice was issued on social media, and the crew will provide a remote-controlled demonstration at a time convenient for the Mayor and Council. The North Pond dredging is scheduled next. Mr. Davis expressed appreciation for city staff's continued efforts on projects and daily operations. He also reported sidewalk concerns at North Westberry Street and U.S. Highway 82, where the steep grade may have contributed to an injury involving an elderly individual in a wheelchair. Staff will contact the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and, in coordination with Public Works, explore repair options due to the sidewalk's location within the right-of-way.

Executive Session: None

Announcements: There were no announcements.

Adjournment

With all agenda items addressed, Councilman Giddens made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The motion passed, with a vote of 4-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK