

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester

City Council Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

Monday, June 15, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. called the meeting to order.

Attendees

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3

Councilman Nykemius J. Hamilton, Sr., Ward 4

City Manager Chris Davis

Assistant City Manager Richie Childers

Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris

City Attorney Lester Castellow

City Clerk Markesha Bivens

Invocation/Pledge

City Manager Chris Davis

Agenda

Upon request by Mayor Proctor to amend the order of agenda items by placing Reports and Remarks before Executive Session, Councilman Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hamilton. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

Minutes

Upon request by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the minutes of the April 26, 2026 – Regular Meeting and the April 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting were approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

Presentation

Mr. Todd Spence of 3G's Auction Company thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to provide auction services to the City and presented the results of the recent auction. Mr. Spence reported that the auction generated \$20,742.50 from the sale of vehicles confirmed as surplus property and a check was presented to the City.

Speakers Appearance

There were no public speakers.

New Business

A. Discussion of Fireworks Celebration Golf Carts

City Manager Chris Davis requested that the Council consider approval of golf carts for use during the July 4th Fireworks Celebration. Discussion included parking arrangements at the Mary Alice Shipp Center, with citizens walking to the concert and vendor area. The use of employees to assist with shuttle operations, consistent with arrangements used the previous year, was also noted. Mr. Davis further noted that the annual Georgia Municipal Training dates coincide with the July 4th Fireworks Celebration. The Mayor and Council were advised to contact City Clerk Bivens if any updates to training arrangements are needed.

Upon a motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the use of golf carts for the July 4th Fireworks Celebration was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

B. Discussion of Business Hours of Operation

Mr. Davis provided information regarding Ordinance 2024-04, Business Hours of Operation, which allows businesses serving alcohol to remain open until 2:00 a.m. and businesses serving food to remain open until 3:00 a.m. Due to increasing law enforcement concerns, staff asked the Council to consider requiring all businesses to close at 2:00 a.m.

The Council discussed law enforcement concerns, compliance, conflicting information, and the need for consistent operating hours. The Council also discussed the importance of not penalizing businesses or limiting their revenue while recognizing that public safety is a priority.

Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the request to require all businesses to close at 2:00 a.m. was approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

With the observance of Juneteenth approaching, June 19-20, the Council discussed allowing businesses to remain open until 3:00 a.m. on those nights. Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilmen Giddens and Hamilton, the request was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

C. Discussion of Local Homestead Option Sales Tax (LHOST)

Attorney Lester Castellow discussed the Local Homestead Option Sales Tax (LHOST) with the Mayor and Council. He also discussed the Flexible Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST), which Worth County and the cities previously chose not to adopt.

Attorney Castellow explained that LHOST is a new 1% local sales tax created by 2026 legislation. The money collected could be used to help lower property taxes on homestead property. Based on Sylvester's average monthly sales-tax collections, the tax could generate a significant amount of revenue and help reduce property taxes.

Mayor Proctor stated that the County and municipalities will meet to discuss the matter further. If there is agreement to move forward, a letter will be sent to Representative Bill Yearata. If approved, the LHOST proposal could be placed on the November 2027 ballot, with collection beginning in January 2028 if approved by voters.

2026-2027 Fiscal Year Budget

A. Work Session

Mrs. Karen Slaton-Dixon presented the proposed balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2026 - 2027 to the Mayor and Council. She reviewed General Fund revenues and expenditures, as well as salaries and benefits. The budget does not include SylTel Broadband Services due to its sale earlier this year. She also reviewed changes to the presentation, noting the total budget is just over \$29 million dollars.

The contingency plan Mayor Proctor asked about in earlier workshops was also reviewed. The plan is to set aside \$50,000 for unexpected expenses, such as storm damage and other unplanned purchases.

All required advertising and public notice requirements were met. No public comments were received. The proposed budget was available for public review at City Hall and placed on the City's website.

B. 3rd Public Hearing

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Mayor and Council Remarks

There were no remarks from the Mayor and Council.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Upon a motion from Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the Public Hearing was adjourned. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

C. Resolution 2026-04: Budget Fiscal Year 2026 – 2027 Adoption

Upon a motion from Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Hamilton, Resolution 2026-04 was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson and Powell. The motion passed, 5-0.

Reports/Remarks

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. mentioned Pope Park adjustments and is pleased with the outcome thus far. With high school baseball no longer using the field, there is more work to be done, and should a kickball group wish to hold a tournament at the field, as mentioned in the past, they could utilize Pope Park in the future.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr. had no report.

Councilman Melvin Powell inquired about new equipment for Public Works and striping for recent paving projects in the community. He also commended Public Works Director Greg Jackson and expressed appreciation for his knowledge and dedication to his work.

Councilman Nykemius J. Hamilton, Sr. had no report.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens inquired on paving and striping at North Isabella Street, and advised yellow striping is incomplete near Unity Baptist.

Presentation: Mayor Proctor paused the remarks and reports portion of the meeting to present Councilman J. Mark Giddens and Councilman Nykemius J. Hamilton, Sr. with certificates recognizing their completion of Newly Elected Officials Training earlier this year. The training is part of the state-mandated training for municipal mayors and councilmembers provided by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

City Attorney Lester Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis responded to the inquiry regarding equipment and stated that no equipment purchases are needed at this time. The dump truck is paid off. A bucket truck will be needed in the future for the Utilities Department, and replacement of the backhoes will also be considered. He reported that the mulcher for the excavator has some issues and that a used paver was recently purchased. The City previously rented a paver, and the purchase was made for approximately one-third of the cost. Regarding striping for recent paving projects, Mr. Davis noted that cost savings are a priority when completing paving and striping for LMIG projects. The goal is to complete more work in-house rather than contracting the work out. He also reminded the Council of City Hall's closure on Friday, June 19, 2026, in observance of Juneteenth, as well as the GMA Conference beginning June 25, 2026.

Additional Remarks:

Public Works Director D. Greg Jackson stated that additional striping supplies have been ordered and that striping near Unity Baptist will resume as soon as possible.

Executive Session

Councilman Giddens moved to convene an Executive Session to discuss Personnel and Real Estate, seconded by Councilman Jackson. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Executive Session Begins: 6:41 p.m.

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

Regular Session Reconvenes: 6:53 p.m.

Upon returning from Executive Session, a motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, to approve the purchase of the property located at 126 North Isabella Street, Sylvester, Georgia, was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

Consideration was also given to an adjustment to the City Manager's contract, including removal of the \$750 monthly gas allowance and use of a City vehicle for travel and City business. Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, jointly seconded by Councilmen Giddens and Hamilton, the adjustment to the City Manager's contract was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion passed 5-0.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

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

Mayor Proctor adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

ATTEST:

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK