



Minutes

City Council Meeting

January 13th, 2025

6:30 pm

Baldwin Municipal Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

Mayor Stephanie Almagno, Councilmember Erik Keith, Councilmember Nancy Lehman, Councilmember Kerri Davis, Councilmember Maarten Venter (via phone), and Councilmember Alice Venter (via phone) were all in attendance.

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Stephanie Almagno opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

Invocation and Pledge

Mayor Almagno listed all present at the meeting.

Action: A motion was made by Nancy Lehman to amend the agenda with the addition of Old Business #4, Consideration/Approval of Habersham County Jail Agreement with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting 12/9/2024 and Work Session 1/7/2025.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the consent agenda as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

Public Comments

No one came forward.

Public Hearings

Reports

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of 2nd Reading of Aguilar Zoning Change Ordinance #2024-12156Z

CAO Emily Woodmaster reviewed the proposed zoning change for 112 Shore Street from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) to Residential Single Family (R2), which is in line with other nearby properties. Council had no further questions or comments. Mayor Almagno read the highlighted portion of the ordinance.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the second reading of Aguilar Zoning Change Ordinance #2024-12156Z as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

2. Consideration/Approval of GIRMA First Responder PTSD Resolution #2025-01158R

Woodmaster reviewed the GIRMA PTSD program mandated by House Bill 451, which was discussed at January work session. This program is designed for public entities to provide

a premium for first responders diagnosed with PTSD as of the effective date of the House Bill passing. There are three different tiers of coverage with a minimum \$3,000 lump sum. However, the maximum of \$15,000 has already been built into the current fiscal year's budget, so Council can choose to increase the lump sum if desired.

The first motion to approve the program participation agreement with the selected premium amount chosen by Council, and the second motion to approve a resolution allowing the City of Baldwin to enter GIRMA's Fund C for the program.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the GIRMA First Responder PTSD Participation Agreement and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the agreement as presented at the \$15,000 premium with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

Action: A motion was made by Erik Keith to approve the GIRMA First Responder PTSD Resolution #2025-01158R as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

Mayor Almagno made a statement regarding how Public Works departments act as first responders yet are not considered such by the mandated House Bill. She continued that the Public Works departments do critical work for their communities, and that the subject needs to be addressed with elected officials at the state level by municipalities.

3. Consideration/Approval of Fire Department Training Facility Agreements

Woodmaster reviewed the separate agreements between the City of Baldwin and Banks County, Clarkesville, Demorest, and Habersham County Fire Departments that were presented at the January work session. Edits requested by Council have been made and more thorough language regarding liability has been added.

Action: A motion was made by Nancy Lehman to approve the Fire Department Training Facility Agreements as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

4. Consideration/Approval of Habersham County Jail Agreement

The Habersham County Jail Agreement was presented at the January work session. Council had no questions or concerns about the agreement.

Action: A motion was made by Kerri Davis to approve the Habersham County Jail Agreement as presented with a second by Maarten Venter. Motion Carried 5-0.

New Business

5. Consideration/Approval of 1st Reading of Mora-Zavala SUP Ordinance #2025-01159Z

Woodmaster reviewed the request for a Special Use Permit from a couple who came before Council last month to request consideration of an SUP to allow a Class A manufactured home to replace the condemned manufactured home already on the property. However, while creating the SUP ordinance, City staff discovered that the warranty deed references a survey of the property with blank spaces for plat book and page number, which is required information when writing Baldwin ordinances. This can present delays as most requests for a property survey are several months out from being filled.

Legal Counsel Jack Samuels noted that there is a book and page number for the warranty deed itself, so if a plat cannot be located, the legal description could be adjusted to allow

for the second reading as scheduled.

Woodmaster's recommendation was to move forward with the first reading, and if no records can be found by the scheduled second reading, a condition can be written into the ordinance that a survey must be done within a certain time limit. Once the survey is complete, the ordinance will come back to the Council to be reauthorized.

Mayor Almagno read the highlighted portion of the ordinance.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the first reading of the Mora-Zavala Special Use Permit Ordinance #2025-01159Z as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

Executive Session

Announcements

- a. Due to unforeseen delays, 2024 property tax information was released later than typically expected, and the bills have now been sent via postal mail. As it is the City's practice to extend the due date in the event of billing delays, the new due date for 2024 property taxes is February 28th, 2025. For any questions, please call City Hall or email cityclerk@cityofbaldwin.org.
- b. City Offices will be closed Monday, January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- c. Councilmember Maarten Venter expressed his appreciation to Baldwin Public Works for their hard work to prepare and maintain the City during and in the aftermath of Winter Storm Cora. Councilmember Alice Venter added that she had received a message from a resident who also praised Public Works and their dedication.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Erik Keith to adjourn the meeting with a second by Maarten Venter. Motion Carried 5-0 at 7:11 pm.


Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

1/27/2025
Date Approved by Council


Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

