

Minutes

City Council Meeting

January 27th, 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, and Councilmember Maarten Venter were in attendance.

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Almagno called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Invocation and Pledge

Reverend Joyce Acree gave the Invocation.

Girl Scout Troop #11208 out of Cornelia led the Pledge of Allegiance.

State of the City – Mayor Almagno

Mayor Almagno presented the 2025 State of the City Address.

Fire Department Recruit Graduation

Assistant Chief Shaun Benfield and Mayor Almagno presented diplomas and helmets to the four new hires from the recruit class that began in August: Corvin Parham, Ross Shelnut, Jordan Evans, and Austin Powell. Mayor Almagno thanked the firefighters and their families.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting 1/13/25 and SCM 1/22/25.

Action: A motion was made by Erik Keith to approve the consent agenda as presented with a second by Nancy Lehman. Motion Carried 4-0.

Public Comments

Paul Wolf of 170 Banks Ridge Drive address Council regarding his 2024 property tax bill and asked how services will either be added or will reflect the City-wide increase. Mayor Almagno responded that the increase is due to the rise in fair market values for homes and also that due to inflation, the cost for the City to provide services has increased across the board. These increases include insurance, salaries, and equipment. Almagno also recommended Mr. Wolf utilize the property tax calculator on the City's website and that he come to City Hall to acquire a Homestead Exemption, as he indicated that he did not have one in place.

Maarten Venter briefly stepped out of the room and returned at 7:21 pm.

Sheena Chambers of 574 Walden Street stated that she has been charged for sewer every month since 2017 despite her home not being connected to the City sewer system, and she was told that after Council approved the new Water and Sewer Use Ordinance she would no longer be charged. However, she was charged for sewer on her January bill. She requested a refund of the money she had paid since 2017, which she estimated to be approximately \$2,000. Mayor Almagno collected Ms. Chambers'

phone number, stated that she would meet with CAO Woodmaster this week, and that she would call Ms. Chambers by the end of the week with an answer.

Public Hearings

Mora-Zavala Special Use Permit Ordinance [#2025-01159Z](#)

Woodmaster reviewed the Special Use Permit request for a Class A manufactured home to be placed at 392 King Street in place of a previously condemned, but now removed, mobile home.

Mayor Almagno opened the public hearing at 7:25 pm.

In Favor: *None came forward.*

In Opposition: *None came forward.*

Mayor Almagno left the public hearing open.

Reports

Water Treatment/Wastewater Treatment – City Engineer Fletcher Holliday

City Engineer Fletcher Holliday presented a report on Water and Wastewater Treatment for the month of December, as well as a summary of overall water and wastewater operations during 2024.

Mayor Almagno opened the floor again for the Mora-Zavala SUP Ordinance. No one came forward. Almagno closed the public hearing at 7:45 pm.

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of 2025 Qualifying Fees Ordinance [#2024-12155](#)

CAO Woodmaster reviewed the qualifying fees ordinance for the 2025 General Election. The positions of Mayor, Post 4, and Post 5 will be up for election in November, and the qualifying fees are proposed to be set at \$35.00, and the ordinance details the qualifying period and details. Council had no further questions. Mayor Almagno read the highlighted portion of the ordinance.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the 2025 Qualifying Fees Ordinance #2024-12155 as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

2. Consideration/Approval of 2nd Reading of Mora-Zavala SUP Ordinance [#2025-01159Z](#)

Woodmaster reviewed the discussion at the previous council meeting regarding a survey for 392 King Street and how the lacking survey could potentially affect the requested Special Use Permit, pending the Council's decision. Woodmaster recommended Council move forward with granting the Special Use Permit with the condition added to the ordinance that a survey must be completed and submitted within 12 months of the ordinance's approval. Once the survey is submitted, this ordinance will come back before the Council for reauthorization. Council had no further questions. Mayor Almagno read the highlighted portion of the ordinance.

Action: A motion was made by Nancy Lehman to approve the second reading of the Mora-Zavala Special Use Permit Ordinance #2025-01159Z with conditions as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.

3. Open Discussion of House Bill 581

Woodmaster led an open discussion on House Bill 581 and answered questions from residents about the House Bill.

New Business

Executive Session

Announcements


- a. Homestead Exemption Affidavits for 2025 property taxes are due April 1st. If you do not have a Homestead Exemption, stop by City Hall or call 706-778-6341 to find out the exemption for which you qualify. If you have a City exemption, but not a County exemption, contact the County Clerk.
- b. Councilmember Maarten Venter made a statement regarding recent incidents of disrespect and stated that issues should be directed towards the Council instead of City staff.
- c. Mayor Almagno and Councilmember Nancy Lehman announced that they would hold an open committee meeting at City Hall on February 6th at 10:30 am to discuss the noise ordinance.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with second by Kerri Davis. Motion carried 4-0 at 8:08 pm.


Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

2/10/2025
Date Approved by Council


Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

