

Minutes

City Council Meeting

April 14th, 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

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting 3/24/25 and Work Session 4/8/25.

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

Public Comments

Maria Machado

Maria Machado of 285 Highland Pointe Drive addressed Council regarding St. Dominic Refurbishment Project and introduced Jeff Roche, the project manager. Roche shared how they had been reaching out to local businesses and establishments and asking for assistance with the refurbishment through donations, volunteerism, and awareness. Roche stated that St. Dominic has helped better the community with a noticeable decrease in vandalism and drug activity. Roche welcomed the Baldwin Council to stop by for a tour or to contact him with any questions.

Public Hearings

Reports

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of Public Works Vac Truck

CAO Emily Woodmaster reviewed the request to purchase a vac truck through the GMA lease program previously discussed and tabled at the March 24th council meeting. There is currently a six-month lead time on the purchase of the vac truck and payments will not take effect until FY27. Council had no additional questions or concerns.

Action: A motion was made by Erik Keith to approve the purchase of a Public Works vac truck through GMA's lease program and to authorize the CAO to execute the agreement as presented with a second by Maarten Venter. Motion Carried 4-0.

New Business

2. Consideration/Approval of Mountain Judicial Circuit MOU

Assistant Chief Justin Ferguson presented to Council an MOU with Mountain Judicial Circuit involving the three accountability courts in Habersham County: drug, mental health, and family treatment. Accountability court compensates off-duty officers for assistance in surveillance, verifying members of the program follow their curfews and other mandates made by the court, and overall confirming the participants and their families are in good health. Any issues and enforcement would be handled by the appropriate jurisdiction.

Typically, the accountability court is handled by Habersham County Sheriff's Office, but currently there is only one Sheriff's deputy and one state probation officer participating and as a result, there is a backlog of visitations. Out of the 30-40 participants, Ferguson estimated 12 are within the limits of Baldwin. The MOU was created to authorize Ferguson to utilize a City of Baldwin vehicle to conduct surveillance on behalf of the accountability court and Mountain Judicial Circuit as Ferguson is on call 24/7 due to his position.

If the MOU were approved, Ferguson would be paid for his time by the accountability court, but Ferguson's City vehicle would be used, and fuel expenses would be paid by the City. Ferguson clarified for Councilmember Lehman that he would only cover Habersham County, not the entire Mountain Judicial Circuit.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the MOU with Mountain Judicial Circuit as presented and to authorize Assistant Chief Ferguson and the CAO to execute the agreement as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

3. Consideration/Approval of Liability & Casualty Insurance for FY26

Woodmaster presented a summary of renewal terms for liability and casualty insurance for fiscal year 2026 via GIRMA and GMA. There is an 8% increase across the board over last year, with the largest increases seen in coverage for vehicles, public safety personnel, and public officials.

Action: A motion was made by Nancy Lehman to approve the Liability and Casualty Insurance for Fiscal Year 2026 through GIRMA and to authorize the CAO to execute the agreement as presented with a second Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.

4. Discussion/Approval of Habersham County Library Board Request

Mayor Almagno shared a letter from Dr. Perry Rettig, the chair of the Habersham County Library Board, requesting an annual contribution of \$5,000 to help offset their State Benefit Plan from the City of Baldwin and opened the floor for discussion. Councilmember Venter requested that the item be tabled for further consideration and information.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to table the Habersham County Library Board Funding Request with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

Executive Session

Announcements

- a. The 26th annual Baldwin Clean Up Day is April 19th! Join us at Mitchell Gailey Park from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm to clean up Baldwin roads and plant a tree. Public Works has

begun Clean Up Week pickup for those who signed up for the service. They will not double back to properties that have already received pickup or did not sign up through City Hall prior to the deadline of April 11th.

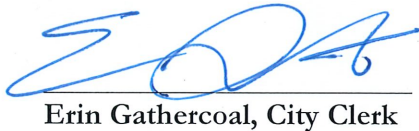
- b. Join us for Theron's Theater (previously Movies in the Market) at the TAP Yard on April 25th at 8:00 pm for a free screening of *The Wild Robot!* Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy a night under the stars with your friends and family! Concessions are available with all proceeds going to Shop with a Hero.
- c. Mayor Almagno thanked the staff and department heads for their preparation and participation in spring retreat, as well as the press for their attendance. The FY26 Budget Town Hall will soon be announced as FY26 budget conversations are underway.
- d. City Offices will be closed on Friday April 18th in observance of Good Friday.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Nancy Lehman. Motion Carried at 7:01 pm.


Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

4/28/2025
Date Approved by Council


Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

