



**CITY OF WALESKA
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2025**

Present: Mary Helen Lamb - Mayor
Dennis Cochran - Pro Tem
Eddie Blackwell - Councilmember
Peter Brown - Councilmember
Michael Greene - Councilmember
Chris Lumpkin - Water Director
Lamar Rogers - Engineer
John Meier - City Attorney
Tacie Jo Bracken - Financial Consultant

Absent: Kristi Bosch - Councilmember
Logan Patrick - Councilmember
Kim Kirsch - City Clerk/City Manager

- Item 1: Call to Order**
Mayor Mary Helen Lamb called the meeting to order, with a quorum present.
- Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation**
Mayor Lamb led the Pledge to the Flag
Councilmember Greene gave the Invocation
- Item 3: Five Minute Public Hearing**
None
- Item 4: Water Report**
- Mr. Rogers discussed the variance letter being requested by the developer of Abbingtion Hall located at 471 Grady Street. It was discussed and decided that the best course of action at this time, due to the list of items they provided, is to bring Cherokee County planning and zoning in on this for a review. The city needs to be sure that what is approved as far as the variance goes is up to the current code of ordinances. Since the city has an IGA with Cherokee County for all building and planning reviews this should be adequate.

- Mr. Rogers notified the council that due to the population and number of customers serviced by the water department the city is now required to file a Water Audit under the Water Stewardship Act of 2010 and Section 391-3-33-.04 WSID - GA0570024 per DNR. This must be done by a certified engineer or if the city chose to do this in-house a certified engineer would be required to validate the information the city provides. Turnipseed Engineers will charge around \$2,500.00 to file this audit and it should be completed by June 27th, 2025.
- Mr. Lumpkin let the council know that we did order three fire hydrant meters. Mr. Lumpkin had personally gone to Station #12 next to city hall over a month ago, given them a meter to use, went to get a reading before the billing cycle and the reading was still zero. Mr. Lumpkin will go back by both fire stations and reiterate that they must use these meters any time they use a City of Waleska fire hydrant and that he will be following up monthly to record the read on each meter. Mr. Lumpkin also created a tracking log to keep track of all usage and has given them multiple copies with instructions on how to use it. If nothing improves, we will be forced to go to the Fire Chief of Cherokee County.
- Mr. Lumpkin let the council know that he has been riding around in his spare time looking for water leaks. With the addition of a new employee, he will have more time to dedicate to locating water loss.
- Mr. Lumpkin is waiting to see what the water loss amount is for the month. Mrs. Smith said she is waiting for the bill from Cherokee County and to run this month's billing but if we purchased over nine million gallons from the City of Canton the water loss will probably be back up.
- Mr. Lumpkin is going to cut off PRV (pressure relief valve) located at the school which is a 2" line which *should* drop what we purchase from the City of Canton because the feed will then be coming from Cherokee County. If the water loss is still in the same range, then something is wrong. It will fill the Byrd Mountain Tank and feed Lower Burris Road. Mr. Lumpkin will get prices on a shutoff valve and let the council know. This money can come from the SPLOST funds.
- Councilmember Blackwell suggested we focus on the meter at Chestnut Hill – water purchase from the City of Canton, and all meters at Reinhardt University but especially the East/West apartments to track down the loss we are experiencing.

Item 5: Consideration to Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes May 5, 2025
Mayor Mary Helen Lamb asked for a motion to approve the Regular Council Minutes for May 5, 2025. A motion was made by Councilmember Greene, seconded by Councilmember Brown, and approved by all members present.

Item 6: 2025 Update - Local Emergency Operations Plan/Continuity of Government Plan

Mr. Meier advised the council that it appeared Cherokee County must update this document every four years. Mr. Meier instructed Mrs. Smith to have Mrs. Kirsch contact Cherokee County about replacing the Vice-Mayor with Mayor Pro Tem. This will be brought back to the next council meeting with the change suggested for review and signature.

Item 7: Yard of the Month

This item was tabled indefinitely by the council.

Item 8: Proposed Budget

- The proposed budget shows the Water Fund will be in the negative \$180,000.00 for fiscal year 2025 – 2026.
- Mr. Meier asked if there was a rational reason to put a rate increase on commercial meters. Mr. Rogers advised that increasing the commercial rate will not necessarily mean a jump in revenue but that it is a good idea to raise those in addition to the residential rates. He stated the city will receive greater revenue by increasing the residential rates. Mrs. Smith, to her recollection, cannot remember a commercial rate increase in the time she has been with the city, which is close to fifteen years. Mr. Rogers asked Mrs. Smith when the last time Turnipseed did a rate study. Mrs. Smith said it had been a long time. Mr. Rogers said the city should raise the water rates 3% to 5% every year. Mr. Meier suggested looking at the water purchase agreements from the City of Canton and Cherokee County. Mr. Meier commented that it would be less money to purchase from Cherokee County than it would be to purchase from the City of Canton. This goes back to turning off the PRV valve at the school. Mrs. Smith will have Mrs. Kirsch reach out to both municipalities to obtain the latest water purchase agreements and provide the council with that information.
- Mr. Meier suggested the council consider purchasing a new pump station using SPLOST money since we have purchased more water capacity from Cherokee County. Councilmember Cochran stated this would eat up a large portion of SPLOST funds but if that would help with the amount being spent on water the city could come out better in the long run. Cherokee County has lower rates than the City of Canton.

- The council discussed several items regarding the proposed budget. Councilmember Brown questioned the cost of postage. Mrs. Smith informed him that the city mails out over 1,400 statements a month so that line-item can be high. It was suggested that the staff send out a flyer on the next billing cycle to inform the customers that if they want a paper bill that would be a \$1.00 monthly increase.
- Councilmember Brown questioned the street light billing rate. A suggestion was made to increase this by \$2.00 per household.
- A sanitation rate increase was discussed. Currently the city has 1,267 sanitation customers. The suggestion was to increase that by \$5.00 a month to cover the cost for the city.
- A water rate increase was also discussed. Councilmember Blackwell suggested a flat \$8.00 increase per household per month, and Councilmember Cochran suggested a per gallon increase.
- Mrs. Bracken confirmed that the city is not billing customers two months in arrears. The billing dates have been corrected in the system by Mrs. Smith.

Item 9: City Manager's Report

- Mrs. Smith directed the council to the document Mrs. Kirsch had prepared which discussed the conversations she had had with GDOT about the "Blind Drive" sign the mayor had mentioned at the last council meeting. This sign would be in vicinity of 8841 Fincher Road. This location does not qualify for a blind drive sign per GDOT.
- Mrs. Kirsch had reached out to Cherokee County Sheriffs Department about using the city hall parking lot to catch people speeding through town. Mrs. Kirsch spoke with Lt. Cornelson, and he advised her he would tell him his team they could use the parking lot to slow down traffic in this area.
- Mrs. Kirsch left information about the possible storage unit facility that will be located at 6497 Reinhardt College Parkway. Mrs. Kirsch has been in communication with Mrs. Stallings with Cherokee County Planning and Zoning about this property. Mrs. Stallings told Mrs. Kirsch that GDOT will determine if a left turn lane or deceleration lane is required. Mrs. Kirsch stressed to Mrs. Stallings that any cost that comes with either of these is solely the responsibility of the property owner. Also, Mrs. Kirsch stressed that any relocation of the water line is solely the responsibility of the property owner as well and the city would insist on Turnipseed Engineers inspecting any and all work done to that water line.
- The council reviewed the application Mrs. Kirsch received from Cherokee County requesting to rezone 2.32+/- acres from AG (General

Agriculture) to R-40 (Single-Family Residential). The council agreed this is acceptable. A motion was made by Councilmember Cochran, seconded by Councilmember Greene, and approved by all members present.

Item 10: City Attorney's Report

- Mr. Meier informed the council that his research shows the property located at 417 Grady Street is now owned by Waleska Abbington Hall LP.

Item 11: Mayor's Report

None

Item 12: Council Remarks

None

Item 13: Adjourn Regular Council Meeting

APPROVED THIS 9th DAY OF June, 2025.

Mary Helen Lamb

Mary Helen Lamb, Mayor

Attest:

Kim Kirsch

Kim Kirsch, City Clerk

