

City of Hamilton
210 Walton Street
Hamilton, Georgia 31811
(706) 628-5321
Mayor Patrick Whearley

February 9, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes

Open Session by Mayor Whearley
Pledge led by Mayor Whearley
Invocation by Mayor Pro Tem Alvin Howard

All members except Councilor Greg Allen were present.

Mayor Pro tem, Howard made the motion to approve January 12th, 2026, minutes with necessary corrections. Councilor Wall seconded. Unanimous vote. Approved.

Fire Report- Chief Oliver reported that they have had 76 calls for service. There have been large wood and brush fires, and some have been false alarms. So far, everything is going smoothly with the Fire department.

Streets/Maintenance Report- Terrence reported that he and Rhett met with a new vendor, to look at the drainage and street issues. The vendor should be getting back in touch within the next few weeks. Everything else is going smoothly with the Streets/Maintenance department.

Water/Sewer Report- Ben reported that there was a leak on Barnes Mill Road that they have been working on several times. They replaced a 12-foot section of pipe and replaced two taps for two homes. Ben believes there was some type of chemical released or dumped at the wastewater plant due to an increase in foam. There are no current violations due to this issue, and everything is going smoothly at the plant. The state is requiring PFAS sampling for the water to detect chemicals. Ben is working with the EPD to conduct said testing. The sample that was submitted was “not detected” meaning that our water has no chemicals. We are awaiting one more test to be completed. Champion Wells is coming out soon to check on an issue for well number 2.

Police Report- Chief Weiss reported that they hosted a child safety seat certification class. He gave special thanks to the River of Columbus Church who provided a generous donation of office supplies and other necessities and is thankful for their partnership. He also gave huge thanks to FOCUS for their partnership and how they contribute to the community.

City Report- City manager, Rhett, gave a report on expected property tax changes and exemptions. Rhett mentioned pending legislation HR1114 and HB1116 and stated if passed they would have immediate and incremental increases on homestead property tax exemptions up to complete abolishment by 2032 acting now should be top priority for all of us. He also remarked on internal process improvement by current staff that should net better tracking and a speedier tax process to better serve citizens. Rhett received the preliminary drawings of our parking project. The parking availability is expected to go from 38 parking spaces to 81. The next stage will be a traffic and feasibility study. Rhett reminded council of Georgia Cities week in April and is hoping to co-brand the outreaches and events with Hamilton specific language to encourage citizens and businesses to engage and support. He also asked for feedback and thoughts from council.

Old Business- Councilor Fields made the motion for Alvin Howard to remain Mayor Pro Tem and to be the department head for Water and Sewer. Councilor Wall seconded. Unanimous Vote. Approved.

New Business- Planning and Zoning Appointments.

- Emily Byrd

- Keith Hammond
- Ryan Overton

Councilor Wall made the motion to approve the new members. Councilor Fields seconded. Unanimous Vote. Approved.

FYI/Updates/Housekeeping-

- Rhett GCCMA Training March 11-13
- Georgia Cities Week April 20-25

Attorney Comments- Attorney Danley spoke on discovered local zoning ordinances of 2005, 2007, and 2008 that were not codified. She provided a document that contained the discrepancies and contradictions across the ordinances. Several of the ordinances were not currently enforceable. Options for enforcement were: add internal resources, outsource or renegotiate the intergovernmental agreement with county authorities. She also stated that all should be reviewed and remarked that a moratorium could be in order until next steps can be taken. She then gave information about Conditional Use Permitting.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard made the motion to adjourn. Councilor Wall seconded. Unanimous Vote. Approved.

Adjourned