



City of Hogansville

City Council

Work Session Meeting Agenda

Monday, June 9, 2025 – 5:30 pm

Meeting will be held at Hogansville City Hall

Mayor: Jake Ayers	2025	City Manager: Lisa E. Kelly
Council Post 1: Michael Taylor, Jr	2025	Assistant City Manager: Oasis Nichols
Council Post 2: Jason Baswell	2025	City Attorney: Alex Dixon
Council Post 3: Mandy Neese *	2027	Chief of Police: Jeffrey Sheppard
Council Post 4: Mark Ayers	2027	City Clerk: LeAnn Lehigh
Council Post 5: Kandis Strickland	2027	* Mayor Pro-Tem

WORK SESSION – 5:30 pm

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Proposed 2025/2026 Budget



Meeting held at Hogansville City Hall, 111 High Street, Hogansville GA 30230

Work Session Meeting

June 9, 2025

Call to Order: Mayor Jake Ayers called the Work Session to order at 5:35pm. Present were Council Member Michael Taylor, Council Member Jason Baswell, Council Member Mark Ayers, and Council Member Kandis Strickland. Also present were City Manager Lisa Kelly, Assistant City Manager Oasis Nichols, Police Chief Jeff Sheppard, and City Clerk LeAnn Lehigh. Council Member Mandy Neese and City Attorney Alex Dixon were not present at tonight's work session meeting.

Order of Business

1. Discussion of Proposed 2025/2026 Budget

City Manager Lisa Kelly presented a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed FY 2026 budget, focusing on prudent financial decisions to support City growth over the next 10-15 years.

Administration: Covers general City Hall functions not assigned to other departments.

Revenue Projections: Property tax revenue is expected to rise due to new home construction (109 new properties Jan-May) and remodels, not from a mill rate increase. The preliminary tax digest from the county is pending; estimates are conservative. There were 250 building permits issued from July 1 last year to May 31 this year. Increased revenue is projected from all development-related lines (development fees, connection fees, building permit income), with conservative estimates.

Staffing Requests: Addition of one Accounting I Clerk (entry-level) to the finance department. This position will assist the Finance Director with managing records, ensuring monthly journal entries, assisting with coding, accounts payable/receivable. Plans are in place to create an office in the airlock with estimated costs under \$5,000.

Key Initiatives: \$50,000 allocated for a Traffic Planning Firm to prepare a comprehensive traffic study. The scope of this work would give an impact analysis, recommendations, conceptual road map, and cost estimates for future roads. This is a necessary step in planning for growth and managing congestion on Highways 54 & 29. The budget is also showing updates to Q-Public at the amount of \$2,500 for a 3-year partnership with Troup County for annual ariel photos and enhanced Q-Public Tools.

Council questioned if one additional accountant was sufficient. City Manager responded that one position is appropriate right now, considering unknowns with the new software and the specialized nature of governmental accounting. Succession planning is a factor. This new position should help realign duties and take some tasks off of already stretched-thin staff. City Manager emphasized the importance of cross-training employees across departments for operational continuity.

Police Department: Current starting pay for police officers is \$21.39/hr and is much lower than neighboring jurisdictions (Grantville \$27.71/hr, LaGrange \$31+/hr or \$60k/year). The city ranks third lowest in a four-county area. The budget proposal is to raise the starting POST certified officer pay to \$26/hr and establish pay parity for other ranked positions. There are also funds set aside for an incentive program, with details to come later, for officer longevity and City residency. There is a request for a non-ranked civilian Code Enforcement/Animal Control Officer.

The Police Department is in need of a new side-by-side, so funds for that are proposed in the budget. There is a plan to sell five out-of-service vehicles and one confiscated vehicle, expecting ~\$42,000 to offset new vehicle costs. Vehicles with patrol equipment will be offered to other agencies for better returns.

Currently, revenue from court fines/forfeitures and probation/technology fees is exceeding budget. The OPB grant covers all other capital purchases; no additional capital items requested. ~\$665,000 remains.

Council Members suggested increasing starting pay to \$27+/hr to match Grantville. Consideration would be needed for pay parity with other city department heads if police pay is significantly increased. The \$26/hr proposal plus parity adjustments impacts the budget by ~\$226,000.

Street Department: \$60,000 allocated for raising manholes in spring, coordinating with GDOT's paving of East Main Street. \$150,000 budgeted to combine with SPLOST funds for street paving (locations TBD after retreat).

There is a request for three new employees to form an additional street crew for roads, grass cutting, sidewalks, and maintenance. Water/Gas employees are no longer available for these tasks due to development demands.

A request is also being made for a Public Works Clerk. This position would work at the Maintenance building and would handle customer calls, work orders, purchase orders, quotes, inventory, and purchasing, improving efficiency and service.

Replacement of the side arm mower is also requested in the budget, with proposed funding coming from SPLOST, potentially split among water/wastewater, pavement/sidewalks, and city equipment projects. Proposed starting pay increase for Maintenance Worker 1 from \$16.50/hr to \$18/hr. This would affect 13 employees across five departments. The current state average is \$19.23/hr.

Water Distribution: The City contracts out water compliance services (testing, lab work, EPD reporting) for \$1,200/month. The current contracted service is reactive, leading to EPD letters and compliance violations due to consultant overload. City staff is proposing hiring a Water Supervisor (ideally with a water distribution license), who would manage the water department employees, oversee the SCADA system, ensure EPD compliance, mapping, and upgrade planning.

Royal Theater: The Theater will continue monthly live performances, supplemented by movies, per the Council guidance. Ticket sales revenue is lower than anticipated, so there is a focus on increasing sponsorships and memberships, and lowering ticket prices for live events, booking talent with less expensive tech riders and hospitality.

There is a proposal to convert the part-time Box Office employee to full-time. Since the employee is currently working close to full-time hours, the budget impact would be minimal. This position would remain hourly. There is also a request to increase the marketing budget to reach a wider audience. There is an anticipated increase in use by local schools and private bookings, conferences, and retreats. Improvement is needed in software for separating revenue from live events vs. movie sales, which is currently combined.

Sewer Collection: Continued funding for engineering services for future growth, using sewer and water models. Developers will contribute to system upgrades via Development Agreements or tap fees. There is funding for lining and manhole repair, especially where the Meriwether County Water Sewer Authority line connects to the City's gravity-fed line. Funds are also proposed for addressing odor issues where lift stations meet gravity-fed lines due to low flow, although this should improve with more connections.

No additional positions are requested in this department; however, some employees would be affected by the proposed Maintenance Worker 1 pay increase to \$18/hr.

Wastewater Treatment Plant & Spray Field: The employee currently budgeted under the spray field will move to the Wastewater Treatment Plant budget. There will be some remaining expenses in this line; hay cutting, grass cutting, insurance. A request is made for a small storage building and new riding lawnmower for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, totaling approx. \$9,000.

City-Wide Budget Highlights

Financial Policies: There is no proposed increase in property tax millage rate and no proposed increases in the utility rates. SPLOST revenues/expenditures generally not in the operating budget, except for earmarked items.

Insurance and Benefits: Budgeting for a 10% increase in all insurance lines (property, liability, auto), excluding medical insurance. A 5.1% increase in medical costs.

Compensation (COLA, Merit): Proposed 2.5% COLA for all employees (based on national average for 2025) and up to 5% merit increases based on performance evaluations, with the exception of Police Department and Maintenance Worker 1 increases. Increase in Christmas bonus amounts, which have currently been \$600 since 2011.

Capital Investments and Major Expenses: Request for natural gas generators at City Hall and the Maintenance Building (currently no backup power), at a cost of \$25,000 each.

Revenue Strategies (Connection Fees): Significant revenue increases anticipated from water/sewer connection fees due to growth. The proposal is to allocate 75% of connection fees to a reserve fund for future water/wastewater improvements and the remaining 25% to be used for operating expenses. Budgeted by department revenue reflects only the 25% portion.

Contingency and Future Planning: \$425,000 remains budgeted as a placeholder for a potential AMR subsidy. No significant progress has been made in two years. Council Member Baswell suggested exploring using these funds to help the Fire Dept. upgrade to Advanced Life Support (ALS) instead.

Additional Equipment: Funds are requested for a much-needed forklift for increasing inventory. A used forklift is estimated to cost \$17,000-\$20,000. This may be requested as a SPLOST earmark.

Overall Financial Growth: The total proposed budget for all funds is \$26 million for FY 25-26. This is a significant increase from FY 23-24 (\$15 million) and 2001 (\$11 million), which reflects substantial City growth.

Council members were asked to thoroughly review the proposed budget document.

Staff were asked to provide a list of all current employees by department and indicate newly proposed positions. Staff were also asked to provide data on the number of new employees hired from FY 23 to present.

Staff will calculate and present the budget impact of increasing police starting pay to \$27/hr (to match Grantville), including parity adjustments ("Version A" figures).

The next budget Work Session meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 16. There will be two public hearings on June 16, one at 10am and the other public hearing prior to the Regular Meeting at 7pm. The Budget Schedule has the potential budget adoption date as June 25, with an alternate date of June 30 if needed. Council Members were asked to communicate any specific concerns or issues to staff before the next work session meeting. Staff will be available to go over any specific items or line-by-line if needed. City Manager agreed to inquire with the Fire Chief about the feasibility and cost of upgrading service to ALS.

Mayor Ayers adjourned the Work Session at 7:49pm.

Respectfully,



LeAnn Lehigh
City Clerk