
City of Plains

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Date: February 19, 2026

Location: Plains City Hall – Council Chamber

I. Call to Order

Mayor Joey Recker called the Regular Meeting of the Plains City Council to order at **7:00 p.m.**

Invocation: Mayor Joey Recker

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Joey Recker

II. Roll Call

City Clerk Cindy Bagwell conducted roll call.

Present:

- Mayor Joey Recker
- Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Harris
- Councilor Amy Wise
- Councilor Andrea Oates
- Councilor A.B. Jackson

Absent:

- Councilor Terry Westbury
 - Councilor Eugene Edge (*arrived shortly after roll call*)
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III. Approval of Minutes

Councilor Wise made a motion to approve the **January 13, 2026, Called Meeting Minutes**. Councilor Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (4–0).

Councilor Wise made a motion to approve the **January 19, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**. Councilor Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (4–0).

IV. Briefing – Mark Shutter, Plains Baptist Church

Mr. Mark Shutter requested permission to hold a **community-wide Easter Egg Hunt** on **April 4, 2026**, at **Maxine Reese Park**. The event will include refreshments and an Easter egg hunt and will be held in conjunction with the **Boys & Girls Club**.

V. Committee Reports

Public Safety (Councilors Westbury & Edge)

- Chief Johnson presented his report; a copy will be added to the official record.
- The department continues working toward fully equipping patrol vehicles. Currently, only one vehicle is fully equipped.
- Councilor Edge had no additional report.

Subdivision & Streets (Councilors Edge & Wise)

- Councilor Edge reported a rotting tree on Main Street that needs removal.
- Mayor Recker stated that **LMIG funds cannot be used for tree removal**. The City will need to obtain estimates from a tree service for removal of this and potentially other trees.
- Councilor Wise will coordinate with Walton Hardin regarding additional signage needs.
- LMIG projects are expected to begin soon.

Water & Sewerage (Councilors Oates & Westbury)

- Several emergency notifications were sent out during the past month.
- Councilor Oates requested that all **811 locate notifications** be forwarded to her.
- Mayor Recker asked Pineland to limit work to **Monday through Friday when possible**, due to overtime concerns.
- Notes from Councilor Oates are attached to the official record.

Mayor Recker also provided an update on the **large well**:

- Two pumps have failed.
- The shafts and casing have been transported to **Headland, Alabama**, for refurbishment and will be reinstalled once completed.
- The timeline for completion is currently unknown.
- Funding for this project is available through the **2020 SPLOST infrastructure funds**.
- The Council will vote on this matter at a later date.

Personnel (Councilors Wise & Harris)

- No report.
- Councilor Harris asked Chief Johnson if there were any applicants for the Police Department. Chief Johnson reported there are **currently no applicants**.
- The Police Academy at **South Georgia Technical College** is currently seeking a suitable candidate.

Hospitality & Public Relations (Councilors Oates & Wise)

- Notes from Councilor Oates are attached to the official record.
- Discussion was held regarding items to purchase for the **District 8 Meeting**, which will be held in Plains on **April 20, 2026**. “Goodie bags” will be prepared for attendees.
- There is a strong possibility that **Billy Carter Day** will be postponed.

Industry, Trade & Tourism (Councilors Jackson & Harris)

- Councilor Harris provided an update on the **restroom renovations**. Pickle Construction is currently completing other projects but will soon begin working full-time on this project.
- Parts have been ordered.
- ADA plumbing in the **ladies’ restroom** has been lowered to meet compliance standards.
- Councilor Jackson thanked the Mayor and Council for their support and outreach during her family’s recent loss.

Finance (Councilors Jackson & Wise)

- The Council reviewed the **Cash Balance Report**.
- No further report.

VI. Other Business for Approval / Discussion

Vote Item #1

Ordinance Amendment – Chapter 2, Article II (Public Officials)

Councilor Harris made a motion to approve the **Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 2, Article II (Public Officials)**. Councilor Wise seconded the motion.

The motion carried **(4–1)**, with Councilor Harris, Councilor Jackson, Councilor Edge, and Councilor Wise voting in favor of the motion. Councilor Oates voted against the motion..

Vote Item #2

Restroom Renovation Project Sign

Councilor Harris made a motion to purchase a **banner identifying how the restroom renovations are being funded**. Councilor Jackson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Vote Item #3

Community Easter Egg Hunt – April 4, 2026

Councilor Wise made a motion to approve the **Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Plains Baptist Church**. Councilor Harris seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Vote Item #4

Pyrotecnico Fireworks Display – Friends of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site

Councilor Harris made a motion to approve **Pyrotecnico's request to perform an aerial fireworks display** for the **Friends of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site on June 24, 2026**.

Councilor Wise seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Vote Item #5

Downtown Car Show – April 11, 2026

Councilor Jackson made a motion to approve a **Downtown Car Show on April 11, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Councilor Wise seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

VII. Mayor's Notes

- **Friends of Jimmy Carter (FOJC) Request:**

Mayor Recker stated that the City cannot make a donation unless it receives something in return, as required by City policy.

- **Hometown Heroes Banner Program:**

There has been significant community response to this program. Mayor Recker proposed that the first banner presentation take place on **July 4, 2026**. There will be **no cost to the City**. Families will purchase banners at approximately **\$100 each**, and City employees will install and remove them at the appropriate times.

- **Georgia Cities Week – April 20–25:**

A participation application has been submitted, and the City should receive a kit in the coming days. Proposed activities include:

1. Kickoff proclamation
2. Civics class at the Boys & Girls Club
3. Tours of City Hall
4. Employee appreciation
5. Coffee with the Mayor and Council

- **Storm Preparation:**

Public Works staff will review preparations to ensure readiness for potential storm events.

- **Bathroom Renovation Progress:**

This item was previously reported under **Industry, Trade & Tourism** by Councilor Harris.

- **GMA Convention:**

The **Georgia Municipal Association Convention** will be held **June 26–30 in Savannah**. Mayor Recker expressed interest in attending.

- **Ownership Update – Inn, Community Center, and Café:**

Mayor Recker reported that clarification has been received regarding ownership of these buildings. The **City currently owns the buildings but should not**.

Better Hometown transferred the buildings to **Friends of Jimmy Carter (FOJC)**. In order to secure a large grant to establish the Inn, ownership was temporarily transferred to the City. The understanding was that the buildings would be transferred back to FOJC after completion, but this did not occur.

As a result, the City has been maintaining insurance and related expenses for the buildings. Attorney **Mr. Skipper** is currently preparing the paperwork to transfer the buildings back to FOJC. FOJC will reimburse the City for insurance expenses incurred this year.

- **GMA District Meeting:**

Previously discussed.

- **Charters of Freedom Concrete Work:**

The concrete work has been completed and looks very nice.

- **E-911 Update:**

A meeting was held with the **Board of Commissioners** regarding dropping the lawsuit. The City received a response letter stating that the **E-911 Authority had agreed to discontinue services to Plains**, which was incorrect.

The Authority later confirmed in writing that **services will not be discontinued** and that they are willing to remove **Sumter County** from the authority. The other seven counties have reportedly been subsidizing Sumter County since the tornado.

- **HR 1243:**

This proposed legislation would create a state managed fund to maintain E-911 authorities.

- **HR 1114 / HB 1116:**

Council reviewed the attached handout. If enacted, these measures could remove approximately **30% of the City's income used to provide services to citizens**.

Sales tax is based on the **point of sale**, and local businesses would not generate enough revenue to offset this loss. Increasing the sales tax would require **voter approval through a referendum**.

Mayor Recker also noted concerns about ongoing legislative conflicts between **state and county governments**, which could significantly impact small municipalities' ability to provide services such as **police protection, water, and other essential services**.

- **SB 496:**

If passed, this legislation would require **county approval for any annexation into a city**.

- **City of Plains Comprehensive Plan:**

The current plan expires **June 30, 2027**. The **River Valley Regional Commission** will assist the City in preparing the updated plan.

Adjournment

Mayor Recker adjourned the meeting at **8:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Bagwell
City Clerk
City of Plains

POLICE REPORT

JANUARY 2026

- **6 Traffic Warnings**
- **10 Traffic Citations**
- **2 City Ordinance Violations**
- **2 Miscellaneous Calls**
- **1 Civil Paper**
- **9 Agency assist**
- **4 Alarm Calls**
- **1 Noise Complaint**

COMMITTEES REPORT:

DR. ANDREA OATES

NOTABLE ENGAGEMENTS

- 1/18 – WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY NOTIFICATION (CALL/WEB)
- 1/23 – GODADDY DELEGATE ACCESS INVITATION (WEB)
- 1/26 – FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION (WEB)
- 1/26 – COLD WEATHER ADVISORY NOTIFICATION (CALL/WEB)
- 1/27 – DOT GOV DOMAIN RENEWAL (WEB)
- 1/29 – OUTLOOK PASSWORD ASSISTANCE (WEB)
- 1/30 – GODADDY DELEGATE ACCESS CONFIRMED (WEB)
- 2/6 – GMA MEETING PLANNING WITH MAYOR AND COUNCILOR WISE (TEXT)
- 2/7 – NOTIFICATION – LOOP ROAD WATER SERVICE (PINELAND)
- 2/10 – PUBLISHED 2026 CITY OF PLAINS EVENTS (WEB)
- 2/14 – NOTIFICATION CORRECTION (WELL)
- 2/14 – COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL WITH MAYOR (PHONE/EMAIL)
- 2/14 – NOTIFICATIONS FEEDBACK WITH STAFF (PHONE/EMAIL)
- 2/18 – PUBLISHED FEBRUARY AGENDA (WEB)
- 2/19 – 2026 WATER SERVICE LINE INVENTORY (CITY HALL)

Council Briefing Handout


Georgia HR 1114 & HB 1116 – Property Tax Reform Proposal

 What Are These Bills?

HR 1114 – A proposed constitutional amendment introduced in the Georgia House of Representatives.

HB 1116 – Companion legislation that would implement the changes in Georgia law if HR 1114 is approved.


Both measures are currently under consideration by the Georgia General Assembly.

 What HR 1114 Proposes

If ultimately approved by the legislature and ratified by voters statewide, HR 1114 would:

- Gradually **eliminate property taxes on homesteaded (primary) residences**
- Shift local government funding away from property taxes
- Require **voter approval** for certain millage rate increases
- Allow creation or expansion of a **local option sales tax** to replace lost revenue
- Permit limited use of local assessments or fees for services and capital projects

This would require statewide voter approval before taking effect.

 What HB 1116 Does

HB 1116 provides the statutory framework to:

- Adjust Georgia's tax code
- Modify ad valorem (property tax) rules
- Establish how replacement sales taxes would function
- Address budgeting and finance procedures for cities, counties, and school systems

What This Could Mean for Plains

Potential Benefits

- ✓ Property tax relief for homeowners
- ✓ Reduced tax burden on primary residences
- ✓ Possible shift to broader-based revenue sources

Potential Challenges

- ⚠ Loss of homestead property tax revenue
- ⚠ Increased reliance on sales taxes (which Plains has limited capacity to generate)
- ⚠ Greater voter involvement required for revenue increases
- ⚠ Possible impact on city services if replacement revenue is insufficient

For a small city like Plains (population ~570, limited commercial base), the ability to replace lost property tax revenue with local sales tax could be challenging due to low retail volume.

Key Questions for Plains

1. What percentage of our current revenue comes from homestead property taxes?
2. Could a local sales tax realistically replace that revenue?
3. Would voter approval requirements slow urgent fiscal decisions?
4. How would this affect long-term capital planning and infrastructure funding?

Bottom Line

HR 1114 and HB 1116 represent a major shift in how cities are funded in Georgia.

For Plains:

- Homeowners would likely see tax relief.
- The city could face revenue restructuring challenges.
- Careful financial modeling would be essential before implementation