CITY OF PLAINS

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 17, 2026
Time: 7:00 p.m.
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: Councilor Terry Westbury
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 A.B. Jackson
- Councilor Amy Wise
- Councilor Andrea Oates
- Councilor Terry Westbury

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Terry Westbury made a motion to approve the August 20, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes. Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of **5-0**.

IV. BRIEFINGS

Mary Moncus appeared before Council regarding the recent increase in property tax assessments. Ms. Moncus stated that in previous years she had requested that the City's millage rate be increased and asked whether Council would consider lowering the millage rate in light of the higher property assessments, in an effort to prevent a significant increase in property taxes for property owners. She suggested that Council consider lowering the millage rate at this time and gradually increasing it over the coming years as needed.

Richard Andrews appeared before Council to request assistance in obtaining a new van for the Boys and Girls Club. Mayor Recker explained that the City could not use taxpayer funds to purchase or provide a vehicle for a private organization. Councilor A.B. Jackson, who serves on the Boys and Girls Club Board, provided Mr. Andrews with information regarding the next Board meeting and encouraged him to attend and present his request to the Board.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilor Terry Westbury

Chief Johnson presented the Police Department report:

- 2 Animal Complaints
- 4 Traffic Citations
- 9 Traffic Warnings
- 2 Drug Offenses
- 2 Welfare Checks
- 5 Alarm Calls

Police Department Personnel: Chief Johnson reported that he had hired James King as a new part-time police officer. Mr. King was scheduled to attend the meeting to introduce himself to Council; however, he was unable to attend due to being detained while assisting with an accident investigation.

Chief Johnson also reported that the police car would be back in operation before the Peanut Festival Parade. The vehicle is being repaired following a deer accident.

SUBDIVISION & STREETS

Councilor Amy Wise

Logan Park: Councilor Wise reported that Logan Park looks great. Friends of Jimmy Carter hired a company to clean the park and spread pine straw. The City appreciates the cooperation of

Friends of Jimmy Carter in helping maintain the City-owned property. Councilor Wise noted that this is a good example of organizations working together for the betterment of the City.

Street Striping: Councilor Wise reported that Southern Striping had completed some work and would return on September 19 to continue. Approximately 90% of the work is expected to be completed by the Peanut Festival.

Street Lights: Mayor Recker reported that he had spoken with a representative of Georgia Power regarding the City's street lights. He plans to meet with the representative the following week to identify the locations where replacements are needed. Mayor Recker stated that he is working toward having the City's street lighting converted to LED lighting.

WATER & SEWERAGE

Councilors Andrea Oates & Terry Westbury

Water Pressure: Councilor Westbury reported that the water pressure issue at Sumter Retirement Village had been resolved. He also noted that Lillian Carter has its own well that can be utilized in the event of an emergency.

Connector Replacement Funding: Councilor Oates discussed funding for the upcoming water service connector replacements. She presented Council with a chart and supporting emails regarding the matter. **See attached documentation.**

River Valley/CDBG: Mayor Recker stated that Council had recently met with representatives of River Valley and that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding was a significant part of the discussion.

City Expenditures: Mayor Recker addressed the matter of several water meters being dropped off at City Hall for a proposed "free" trial. He stated that no City employee has the authority to obligate City funds or commit the City to an expenditure and that the authority to obligate City funds rests with the City Council.

PERSONNEL

Councilors Amy Wise & Ellen Harris

Discussion Regarding Police Officer Hiring: Due to a misunderstanding regarding the hiring process for police officers, Mayor Recker requested that Council discuss the matter. Councilor A.B. Jackson stated that, in the past, the Police Chief had the authority to hire police officers at his discretion. Council expressed a desire for prospective police officers to appear before Council

so that Council members could meet the individual and have an opportunity to speak with him or her prior to employment.

Councilor Terry Westbury noted that much of the background investigation and information available concerning prospective police officers is accessible only to the Police Chief through the Chief's GCIC network. Council discussed the hiring process and the respective roles of the Police Chief and City Council.

HOSPITALITY & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilors Andrea Oates & Amy Wise

Councilor Oates reported that the City's website and newsletter updates are being maintained.

INDUSTRY, TRADE & TOURISM

Councilors A.B. Jackson & Ellen Harris

Peanut Festival Parade: Councilor A.B. Jackson reported that she would try to secure a truck for Council members to ride in during the Peanut Festival Parade.

Old Election Building: Councilor A.B. Jackson asked what might be done with the old election building. Mayor Recker stated that he had some ideas for the building when funding becomes available. One possibility discussed was converting the building into a small Welcome Center where visitors could obtain brochures and view photographs and other information related to President Carter. Mayor Recker also suggested that the building could serve a dual purpose and be utilized for meetings and other City-related activities.

President Carter's Birthday Celebration: Councilor A.B. Jackson mentioned the upcoming celebration of President Carter's birthday on October 1. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that arrangements for the celebration were being handled.

FINANCE

Councilors A.B. Jackson & Amy Wise

Cash Balance Report: Council reviewed the Cash Balance Report. Mayor Recker briefly reviewed the City's overall fund balances and reminded Council that purchases and expenditures should be made from the appropriate budget line item.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

VOTE ITEM #1 – RETIREMENT RECOGNITION FOR CHARLES SMITH

Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to table this item until the October meeting. Councilor A.B. Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of **5-0**.

VOTE ITEM #2 – TRAFFIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Flashing Stop Sign: Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to purchase a flashing stop sign to be placed at the railroad crossing where Bond Street crosses Highway 280. Councilor A.B. Jackson seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of **4-1**. Councilors voting in favor were Wise, Harris, Jackson, and Westbury. Councilor Oates voted against the motion. Funds for the purchase will come from T-SPLOST.

Radar Speed Devices: Councilor Oates made a motion to approve the purchase of two radar speed devices. Councilor A.B. Jackson seconded the motion. Following discussion, Councilor Oates amended her motion to include the purchase of two sets of extra batteries. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the amended motion.

The amended motion passed unanimously by a vote of **5-0**.

VOTE ITEM #3 – REPAIR OF BROKEN WINDOW IN F-150 WORK TRUCK

Councilor Amy Wise made a motion to have JR Auto repair the broken window in the City's F-150 work truck at a cost of $350. Councilor Terry Westbury seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of **5-0**. The expense will be paid from Water and Sewerage funds.

VII. MAYOR'S NOTES

Legislative Policy Council: Mayor Recker reported that he had attended his first meeting of the Legislative Policy Council. He stated that the meeting was very informative and that he would be bringing additional information to Council from the meeting. He noted that city expenses and budgets were a major topic of discussion. Flock cameras and NextGen 911 were also discussed.

Peanut Festival: The Peanut Festival will be held September 26. Streets will close from 7:00 a.m. until midnight. A street dance will be held in Maxine Reese Park.

Christmas Parade: The Christmas Parade will be held November 28. Streets will close from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Trunk or Treat: Trunk or Treat will be held October 31. Streets will close from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Zoning Update: City Attorney Skipper is working on the zoning ordinance related to short-term rentals/bed and breakfast accommodations. Mayor Recker reported that the zoning ordinance is outdated and that City Attorney Skipper plans to rewrite the ordinance before it is presented to the Zoning Committee and City Council for final approval.

Food Truck Update: Mayor Recker reported that the food truck ordinance has been prepared and is awaiting receipt. The ordinance is expected to be available for Council review at the next meeting.

DDA Update: The first Downtown Development Authority meeting will be held October 13. Mayor Recker will call the meeting to order, and the City Clerk will take minutes. The first priority will be to appoint officers. Once the officers have been appointed, Mayor Recker will turn the gavel over to the Authority.

MissionSquare 457(b): Mayor Recker reported that the final paperwork has been signed.

GMA Hometown Connection: The event is scheduled for December 17. Mayor Recker reported that "Save the Date" notices have been sent to officials who are running for office, and invitations will be sent to those who are elected.

Logan Park: Mayor Recker expressed appreciation to Friends of Jimmy Carter for its assistance with Logan Park and stated that the project is an example of a strong partnership.

Bricks for Charter of Freedom: Mayor Recker reported that the bricks have arrived. Several bricks were damaged, and the City Clerk will contact the company regarding the damaged items.

Street Lights: This matter was addressed during the Subdivision & Streets Committee Report.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Terry Westbury made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Amy Wise seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of **5-0**.

Mayor Recker adjourned the meeting at **8:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Bagwell
City Clerk
City of Plains