

City of Maxeys Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 11, 2026
Call to order – 7:00pm
Minutes taken by Jenny Yearwood-Parker, City Clerk

Present:

Edward Toledano, Mayor
Danny Gorman, Mayor Pro-Tem and Council Member
Carrie Hayes, Council Member
Carrie Hyatt, Council Member
Doug Miller, Council Member

Absent: Shirley Callahan, Council Member

Guests:

Blake Smith, Sarah Whiting, Mark Whiting, and Kevin Wilson

All items below are recorded from the agenda

- (Item 1) The meeting was called to order directly at 7pm.
Invocation was said by Danny Gorman; All attending recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- (Item 2) The Mayor requested to adjust the Agenda for this meeting to add a Building Permit from George Johnson and under public works we are going to add a Fire Department update. A motion was made to adjust the Agenda for August's meeting and the adoption of the minutes from the June 2026 meeting as we did not meet in July.
Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Doug Miller, Council Member; Seconder: Carrie Hyatt, Council Member; Ayes: Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.
- (Item 3) Announcement of next meeting date of September 8, 2026 at 7pm.
- (Item 4) Citizen Input
 - None.
- (Item 5) City Communication updates
 - The Mayor recognized Mrs. Sarah Whiting, who provided the Council with an update regarding the County Library.
 - Our Oglethorpe Library held the annual Summer Reading Program in June and July, 2026. The Maxeys community was well represented in having 14 volunteers aging from 12 to 90 something! We logged in 114 hours of community service to the children of the area. Many of our Maxeys children were spotted taking advantage of the SRP. The children participated in several activities that encouraged reading throughout the summer.
 - The library offers several programs for the area: Libby is an app that allows rental of ebooks and audiobooks, along with magazines. Kanopy is an app that provides streaming of movies and tv shows on iPad and phones.
 - The Palace Project allows the user to rent ebooks, audiobooks, and programs through it app also.
 - The library offers a plethora of books here in Oglethorpe county, but you may also request books from other libraries throughout the PINES library system. The library system offers a service that allows you to place a book on hold, and the courier will bring it to your library.
 - Another fun fact about the library is that you are able to check out Park and museum passes, musical instruments, puzzles and games, cds and dvds. All these are offered free to library patrons. All that is needed is a current library card, which is available to anyone with a valid ID, or a parent's ID.
 - As usual, the Library board is appreciative of the \$500.00 donation from the city of Maxeys, and would love for the council members to consider an increase next year as our library is working to hire another part time staff member.
 - The library offers several programs for children, teens and adults, not just in the summer, but throughout the year.
 - Thank you for supporting the library!
 - The Mayor brought to the attention of the Council that the City's annual insurance premium has increased to \$5,990.00, representing an increase of approximately \$1,200.00. The Mayor stated that he plans to contact the City's insurance representative to determine whether there are any options available to reduce or adjust the cost of the premium. If a reduction cannot be obtained, the City may consider obtaining quotes from other insurance

providers to determine whether more competitive coverage is available. The Mayor reminded the Council this is something we need to consider when developing 2027's budget.

- (Item 6) Permit Applications–

- George Johnson submitted a building permit application to construct a home on a lot he owns on Willow Street. The Mayor provided the Council with documentation showing that the proposed construction meets the required 10-foot setback on each side of the property from the adjoining property lines. The property does not currently have a water meter. Mr. Johnson will apply for a water tap when the home is nearing completion. The Mayor called for a motion to approve the building permit application.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Danny Gorman, Council Member; Seconder: Doug Miller, Council Member;

Ayes: Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

- (Item 7) Reports from Mayor

- Arborist Report – The Mayor then moved on to discuss a report prepared by Mateo Fennell, the Arborist for Clarke County. The Mayor and Council discussed the recommendations contained in the report regarding the care and maintenance of trees located on City property. The Council will review the report and develop recommended action steps for discussion at the September meeting. Any costs associated with the recommended tree care may be considered for inclusion in the 2027 City budget.
- Hazard Mitigation Plan – This is a document we sign this annually. The Mayor is making the Council aware that he plans to sign this and we will rely on the fire department to take care of the forest. The Mayor will be signing this in the next few days.
- Comprehensive Plan –The Mayor reported to the Council that a public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Plan will be held on August 31 at 6:00 p.m. at the County Office. Carol Flaute will be present to answer questions regarding the plan. The Mayor requested that Council Members notify him of any additions or revisions they feel are needed, noting that the plan is not due until October. The Mayor then explained to the guest in attendance that the Comprehensive Plan is a five-year work program developed by cities and counties and submitted to the State. The purpose of the plan is to provide the State with an understanding of potential projects and funding needs within the community, particularly when applying for grants. The Mayor reviewed the various projects planned for the community and explained that, based on past experience, projects generally need to be included in the Comprehensive Plan in order to be eligible for certain State-funded grants.
- Kinetics/Windstream Contractor Issues – Council Member Gorman discussed the ongoing installation of fiber optic lines within the City. There was discussion regarding the first company contracted to provide this service for Kinetics, which struck the City's water lines numerous times during the installation. The company is no longer working for Kinetics. The Mayor reported that he has spoken with Chairman Jay Paul regarding the matter to determine whether the City has any options for requiring the company to pay for the damages caused to the City's water lines.
- EPD PFAS testing – The Mayor reported this is a test done annually where the Environmental Protection Department test the City's water for plastic. There is a public call scheduled for this Friday which the Mayor plans to be part of to learn more about this testing and ask questions. He will report back to the Council with any additional news next month.
- Complaints received about Trees, Shrubs over Roadway and Chickens running free on Willow Street, and there being NO Action on the playground renovation – The Mayor had the emails from our citizens to share with the Council Members. The Mayor explained that he would address the trees and shrubs with the playground a little later in the agenda. He will be sending a letter to the owners of the chickens asking them to keep their birds off their neighbors property.

- (Item 8) Committee Reports

- Finance & Budget
 - City Finance Report for July
 - The Mayor reported that Council Members should have received their June financial reports prior to his leaving town in July. He stated that there were no issues with the reports. The only unexpected expenses were \$869 paid to the EPD for testing and \$2,191 in repair costs associated with the water lines damaged by the contractor working for Kinetics/Windstream. Council Member Gorman asked how the work was completed and how the water lines were located. The Mayor explained that 8-1-1 was contacted and the water lines were marked. However, because tracer lines had not been installed with SOME of the City's water lines, the actual location of the water lines did not correspond with the markings, resulting in the contractor striking the City's water lines. Council Member Gorman then shared his experience with Kinetics and noted that he also uses Spectrum. He stated that, in his experience, the company did not appear concerned about cutting existing utility lines during

the installation process. The Mayor reiterated that he is continuing discussions with County officials to determine whether the City can recoup the expenses incurred as a result of the contractor damaging the City's water lines.

- The Mayor reported that he is preparing a preliminary budget for the Council to review within the next month or so. He would like to have the budget finalized and ready for approval by the November Council meeting.

- Parks & Recreation

- Brightwell Park and the Community Center

- The Mayor reported that Carson Anthony plans to begin clearing the brush on the Community Center property tomorrow. Council Member Gorman asked whether Mr. Anthony was aware of the property lines. The Mayor assured Council Member Gorman that only the section located on City property would be cut and/or cleared.
- City Clerk Jenny Yearwood-Parker explained that because the Community Center had not been used during the summer due to issues with the HVAC unit, she did not think to have the facility cleaned prior to its rental in early August. Going forward the Clerk will report to the Council at each meeting if the Community Center is being rented. This will help keep the Mayor and Council Members informed about the use of the facility and serve as a reminder to the Mayor to schedule cleaning when necessary. The Mayor then discussed the possible purchase of a generator for the Community Center so the facility could be used as a shelter in the event of an extended power outage. The Mayor had not yet had an opportunity to compile the necessary information and costs for the Council's consideration, so the matter was put on next month's agenda. The Council discussed whether a natural gas line runs to the Community Center. Following the discussion, the Mayor agreed to also obtain information and pricing on electric generators for consideration.
- Moving on to the playground, the Mayor explained that part of the complaint he received concerned the existing playset, which is plastic equipment designed for residential backyard use rather than commercial playground use. The Mayor asked the Council for permission to remove the playset. A Council Member Gorman noted that citizens may not fully understand the significant cost associated with purchasing commercial-grade playground equipment. The Mayor reminded the Council that the City had previously applied for grants for playground improvements. He explained that he had contacted a firm called Simply Grants, which assists municipalities with grant applications. The firm provided a quote of \$2,500 for 20 hours of service. The Mayor stated that he had not made any commitment to the company and suggested that the City first attempt to identify and apply for available grants on its own. He had several grant opportunities available for the Council to review. The Mayor also reported that he had spoken with a representative from CoreCap, a commercial playground equipment company located in Hartwell. The representative offered to visit the City's playground, assess the existing equipment and provide an estimate of the cost for improvements, as well as assist the City in identifying potential grant opportunities. The Mayor stated that he planned to move forward with contacting the company but would need assistance from the Council. Council Member Miller asked whether the City had investigated purchasing used playground equipment through government listservs. The Mayor stated that this had not yet been explored. The Mayor discussed the importance of first developing a plan for the type of playground equipment the City would like to have. He also noted the challenge of ensuring that used playground equipment meets current safety and code requirements. There was discussion regarding whether equipment that does not meet current specifications would be available for sale. Council Member Gorman discussed playground equipment that had previously been located in the park. The Council then discussed removing the existing slide. There was a question as to whether a Council vote was necessary to remove the slide since it had been donated. Council Member Hayes stated that the piece of equipment in question is broken and unsafe and that a citizen had already expressed concern that it was unsafe. She stated that, regardless of the fact that the equipment was donated, it is not commercial-grade playground equipment and should therefore be removed. The Council expressed appreciation for the donation while recognizing the need to prioritize the safety of children using the park. Council Member Gorman reminded the Council that changes to the park, whether involving donated or purchased equipment, may not make all citizens happy. He noted that similar concerns had arisen in the past when playground equipment was removed because it was determined to be unsafe, and citizens did not always understand the reasons for its removal. It was agreed the plastic equipment located in the park should be removed.

- Firefly Trail

- The Mayor reminded the Council that he had included them with his quarterly report to the DNR on our rails and trails. All we reported is that we have done nothing and that bids are out. So now the Mayor moved on to the bids the City has received. We have heard from four contractors. One of the contractor's bid is under the range of our grant funding and the other three are a good \$65,000 to \$80,000 above the grant funding. The

Mayor plans to call each contractor to make sure all of the contractors are reviewing the exact same specs. For example one of the questions to the contractor may be, are you giving us 4 inches or 6 inches of GAB. Questions like this will help the Mayor and the Council to figure out which contractor best fits the City's needs. There was discussion among the Council members where Council Member Gorman wanted to know how much was the lowest bid. And because the bids are so far apart from each other, this is why the Mayor feels like he needs to clarify with the lowest bidding contractor that they are giving us all that is in the specs for the price they have quoted. Council Member Gorman felt like the lowest bid should be awarded the job, assuming this contractors is giving us all the City has asked for in the specs.

■ Discussion Regarding Paving Near Blake Smith Property and Firefly Trail

The Mayor moved on to discuss Blake Smith's attendance at the meeting and the paving plans around his property. The Mayor stated that if the City is unable to pave out to the right-of-way and construct the path outside of Mr. Smith's property, he would be agreeable to allowing a gravel path to go through his property, provided there is minimal tree removal. He also stated that if this option is pursued, Firefly Trail, Inc. would plant additional brush along the side of the path adjacent to his house. There was also discussion regarding the possibility of installing a privacy fence. The Mayor reviewed the history of the Firefly Trail project and reminded the Council that the County was originally responsible for the Trail because the City was not a qualified governing body at the time. The engineering work was completed along the former rail bed, and no accommodation was made for an easement on Mr. Smith's property because an easement was not in place when the grant application was submitted. The Mayor stated that there has never been an easement onto Mr. Smith's property. He reminded the Council that, during the original construction discussions, the main contractor had proposed removing approximately 30 trees from Mr. Smith's property. The Mayor stated that those matters are in the past and that the City needs to focus on moving forward. At this point, the plan is for the Trail to go out and around Mr. Smith's property due to the existing culvert. This option will require additional fill dirt and will increase the cost of the paving project. The Mayor explained that the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank, administered by the State Road and Tollway Authority, provides grants and loans for a variety of transportation-related projects. He stated that, optimistically, the City may be able to obtain funding from this source to help cover the additional cost associated with the proposed workaround, which could allow the project to continue moving forward. The application deadline is next Tuesday, and the Mayor is working with John Fusain on the application. The Mayor stated that the City is also contacting Corbett Reynolds with GDOT to confirm that the Trail has permission to use the GDOT right-of-way. Council Member Gorman noted that much of the Trail in Greene County is located within the right-of-way, as is the case in Athens-Clarke County. Jay Paul, Chairman of Oglethorpe Commissioners and Trey Rhodes, Georgia State House Representative are also involved in these discussions. The Mayor stated that his goal is to continue working toward the best possible solution for Mr. Smith, the property owners beyond his property, the City, and Firefly Trail. There was discussion about the possibility of paving up to Mr. Smith's property line and then beginning the paving again beyond his property. Council Member Hyatt stated that Plan A would be to use the funds currently available to pave up to Mr. Smith's property line. Plan B would be to include the proposed workaround in the current project, if funding can be secured. Plan C would be to use TSPLOST funds if necessary. The Mayor stated that he is working to confirm whether TSPLOST funds can be used for this portion of the project. The Mayor thanked Mr. Smith again for attending the meeting and participating in the discussion. The Mayor reminded the Council that interpretive signs will need to be designed to highlight the historical significance of the railway. He stated that he plans to work with John Kassane on the design and content of the signs. The Mayor then moved on to discuss the house located on the Dyer property. He stated that once the paving plan is finalized, the removal of the house will be scheduled immediately ahead of the paving work. The house will then be removed, allowing the paving project to proceed beyond that point.

○ Maxeys 5K

- The Mayor recognized Mrs. Sarah Whiting, who provided the Council with a report on the funding currently held by the City. Mrs. Whiting reported that the cost of the 5K Race was \$4,860, with \$6,250 raised for scholarships, resulting in a net profit of \$1,389. Mrs. Whiting stated that it was her understanding, as well as Jenny Miller's understanding, that the funds were not to be spent and were to be reserved strictly for amenities associated with the Trail. The Mayor respectfully reminded Mrs. Whiting and the Council that there was never a written agreement establishing how the funds were to be managed or used. He explained that while the City has managed the funds, it has done so with the intent of using them toward Trail amenities. The Mayor stated that he intends to exhaust all other available funding sources in an effort to complete the Trail before using any of these funds if needed. And of course, the use of these funds to finish the Trail would involve the Council and

those who administer the 5K Race. The Mayor thanked Mrs. Whiting and her team who continue to be an asset to the City and make the 5K Race happen successfully every year.

- Veterans Park
 - The Mayor reported that there was no report.
- Rotary Club Peace Garden
 - The Mayor has given the MOU to the Oglethorpe Rotary Club, they are reviewing it. The Rotary Club has paid \$500 to the City for maintenance to the Peace Garden. There was discussion of the plaque on the Rock in the Peace Garden and how great that looked.

- Utilities

- Water Accounts
 - The Mayor asked the Clerk for an update regarding past-due utility accounts. Mrs. Parker reported that one account was three months past due, she sent the letter from the City, and at the time of this meeting this account is now current. Council Member Miller asked if anyone had any feedback about the increasing of the rates. Mrs. Parker reported there has been no complaints. Council Member Gorman asked about how many people were paying electronically. Mrs. Parker reported about 20-25. She would love to see the water customers move to receiving their bills via email. Currently we have about 30 customers who are receiving their bills via email. There was discussion about developing a plan to get customers to sign up to receive their bills via email.
- Generator to run water pumps
 - The Mayor stated that he plans to bring a proposal regarding a backup generator to the Council for consideration in September. He explained that the primary question is whether the City should purchase an electric generator capable of holding a charge for approximately 48 hours or a gas-powered generator. Council Member Gorman noted that cell phone towers are equipped with diesel generators and large diesel fuel tanks. The Mayor stated that he had not initially thought the City would need a system of that size but would look into the option as well. The Mayor explained that his primary concern is maintaining adequate water pressure throughout the City during a power outage. He noted that when the City's existing water tank drops to approximately half full, customers on the outskirts of town begin to experience a loss of water pressure.

- Public Works and Infrastructure

- Fire Department – Complaint from fire team
 - The Mayor gave Council Member Gorman the floor who reported that the Fire Department had returned from a call and could not locate their radio chargers. There was discussion of building a wall to separate where the Fire Trucks and equipment is stored from the Fire Hall. The Mayor responded that he would watch the cameras in the Fire Hall to determine if anyone had accessed the building. This seems to be another issues as the Fire team does not want their meetings on camera or recorded. Of course when the Fire team is sponsoring a fund-raiser, they would be allowed to use all the of the Fire Hall but the best solution going forward would be to build a wall to separate the Fire Hall into two sections. The Mayor said he had gotten a quote of about \$4,000 to construct the wall. This would save us on air condition and heating the space. The Mayor said this would be a project for next year's budget and it will be included.
- GDOT – LIMRA & LRA projects
 - The Mayor reported that at our last meeting in June, he had said he was going to apply for a LRA grant for the parking lot at the City Hall. This grant does not allow funding for parking lots. So he adjusted the application to go to other projects that the Council had identified, i.e., speed bumps, corners, aprons, etc.
- Nuisance Properties – Nuisance Buildings
 - The Mayor reported that the nuisance properties will be getting a second notice because no one has taken any action. Once this letter is mailed stating a time frame for response, if nothing has been completed to improve the properties, the next step is to legally let the property owner know that we will begin destruction of their building and we will place a lien on their land for the cost of that destruction.
- City Property Clean Up Plan
 - The Mayor reported that the Community Center clean up is under way. The Firehouse is underway. We need to get to work on the screen building. There was discussion of the item located in the attic of the City Hall. We want to be able to go through those items stored there and determine what can be destroyed. There was some discussion of how to destroy any old files that are not needed, but of course, this would be after checking to make sure there is no retention record restrictions for them. When the Mayor was cleaning up the storage area in the Fire Hall, he found two complete boxes of floor tile that is in the lobby and the City Hall area whereby we can replace most of the broken tiles. The Mayor would like to have a plan and establish dates for the work to get completed.

- Overgrowth on City Roadways

- The Mayor reported that he has received complaints regarding trees growing along Sunset Street that are making it difficult for campers, delivery trucks, and other large vehicles to access residents' properties. Council Member Gorman stated that the citizen's concern was valid, noting that he has experienced difficulty each year accessing Sunset Street with his Christmas float. The Mayor explained that the City currently does not have a tree or vegetation ordinance specifying what property owners are required to do to keep vegetation trimmed and the roadway passable. Therefore, the responsibility currently falls to the private property owners. The Mayor suggested that the City identify the problem areas and approach the affected property owners about allowing the City to trim or remove the vegetation causing the access issues. The cost could either be included in the 2027 budget or paid from the City's maintenance category. Since the City will already be hiring a crew to address trees on City property identified in the Arborist's report, the Mayor suggested that the City consider having the same crew address trees and vegetation on private property that are creating access problems. Any work on private property would only be performed after receiving written approval from the property owner. The Council continued discussion and identified several areas that may need to be addressed. The Mayor and Council agreed to consider developing a policy in the future to provide guidance on how these situations should be handled. The Mayor requested that Council Members drive through the City, make note of locations where trees or vegetation are creating access concerns, and provide those locations to him for review. The Mayor also stated that he would contact Chairman Paul to determine whether the County may be able to assist the City with addressing these issues.

- Administration

- Animal Control and Noise Ordinance

- The Mayor reminded the Council that in the past two meetings, we have adopted the Oglethorpe County Noise and Animal Control ordinance, whereby the Sheriff's Office can enforce this ordinance for the City. The MOU with the Sheriff's has not been signed by the Sheriff's Office because they want the City to adopt their ordinance first. The Mayor presented the resolution to the Council stating that the City's adoption of this ordinance is complete and it becomes part of the City's ordinances. We don't have to change any Animal Control or Noise Ordinance the City already had in place because this resolution states this ordinance applies to the City of Maxeys. The Mayor is simply stating to the Council that this has been completed. He will sign it, along with the Clerk. We put the City's seal on it and we send it to the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff should sign the MOU from the City which will allow the Sheriff's department to enforce this ordinance.

- Taking flags down

- Council Member Gorman asked about taking the flags down. It was agreed to leave them in place until after the Labor Day holiday.

- (Item 9) Adjourn. At 8:15pm, the Mayor requested a motion to Adjourn the May meeting.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Doug Miller, Council Member; Second: Danny Gorman Miller, Council Member; Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, Miller.