

City of Maxeys Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Call to order – 7:01pm
Minutes taken by Jenny Yearwood-Parker, City Clerk

Present:

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

Guests

Marty Berclay, Leta Bird, Jon Cabaniss, Anne Garner, David Hemingway, Dave Johnson, and John Stephens

All items below are recorded from the agenda

- (Item 1) Mayor Toledano called the meeting to order at 7:01pm; Invocation was said by Danny Gorman; All attending recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- (Item 2) Before the Adoption of Agenda for February Meeting, the Mayor amended the agenda to include John Stephens to speak to the Council before the Citizen Input (Item 4). A motion was made for the adoption of the agenda with the amendment and the adoption of the minutes from the January 2026 meeting.
Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Shirley Callahan, Council Member; Seconder: Doug Miller, Council Member; Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.
- (Item 3) Announcement of next meeting date of March 10, 2026 at 7pm. The Mayor brought to the attention to the Council members that he would be out of the country for the July 2026 meeting. He was just putting this information on the record to make them aware of this information and would handle accordingly.
- (Item 3B which was added) The Mayor recognized Mr. John Stephens. Mr Stephens addressed the Council as the President for the A.T. Brightwell Scholarship Group. He expressed how the City had been very good to the Group allowing the Group to meet at the Community Center at no charge. In checking his minutes from last year, the Group had voted to give the City a grant of \$2000, however both he and the Executive Director had forgotten this commitment. They wanted to do the same thing for 2026, as he presented 2 checks to the City which are earmarked to help with the repairs to the Community Center. The Mayor graciously accepted these checks and expressed his thanks to Mr. Stephens and the Brightwell Scholarship Group.
- (Item 4) Citizen Input
 - Mr. Dave Johnson addressed the Council concerning the house located on Forest Circle, directly behind Bill and Barbara Cabaniss' home, that has broken windows and is in a state of disrepair. The Mayor responded that the Council is aware of this property, along with six other buildings in the City. Letters have been sent under the nuisance ordinance requiring the owners to address these issues in some manner. The City hopes to see results within the next six months.
- (Item 5) City Communication updates
 - The Comprehensive Plan is currently being developed. This is a five-year plan being prepared jointly by the City and the County. A Comprehensive Plan Meeting will be held Wednesday, February 25, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the County offices. The Mayor requested that at least two additional Council members attend, noting that it is helpful to have multiple representatives present. The plan is due in October. While there is limited work required at the meeting itself, the City must carefully consider and develop a list of priorities and goals.
 - The Mayor reported that he has been made aware of SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements). Based on Georgia law, it is believed the City of Maxeys must remain registered with SAVE. Georgia's Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act requires local governments to use SAVE to verify immigration status for applicants seeking public benefits or licenses. Even if the City does not provide public benefits, it appears an active SAVE account must still be maintained. Mr. John Stephens added that this requirement was in place during his tenure as Mayor.
- (Item 6) Permit Applications–
 - Mr. Raphael Velasquez requested permission to renovate the old church at 241 Cherry Street and convert it into a family home. He provided a plat showing the approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lot and plans to remain within the existing

structure, performing interior renovations and adding an upstairs level. Council discussed zoning, lot size, and septic considerations, given the change in use from church to residence. The Mayor stated he would verify zoning and septic requirements with the County and report back if issues arise. There was a motion made to approval this permit application.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Danny Gorman, Council Member; Seconder: Shirley Callahan, Council Member; Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

- Mr. Jon Cabaniss requested a permit for renovations to a home he recently purchased at 334 Sunset Drive. He apologized for work beginning before permit submission, explaining it resulted from a miscommunication with his crew. Mr. Cabaniss has began to cleanup of debris left on the lot. He stated he purchased the property because it borders his own and plans to use it as a rental rather than selling it. The Mayor clarified County requirements for electrical and plumbing inspections prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy and will follow up with Mr. Cabaniss in writing. There was a motion made to approve this permit application.

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

Once this motion was approved the Mayor stated that he would email Jeff and Teresa at the County offices stating this was approved so that Mr. Cabaniss could start work again.

- (Item 7) Reports from Mayor

- The Mayor thanked the Council and recognized the City's accomplishments over the past 12 months, marking the Council's one-year anniversary. Highlights included:
 - Completion of ARPA (American Rescue Plan) reporting.
 - City audits are current, qualifying the City to receive grant funding.
 - Strengthened relationships with County officials and other Oglethorpe County municipalities.
 - Full water system assessment completed; four water meters replaced and we had 3 new installs.
 - Decks and railings rebuilt at the Community Center.
 - Flags replaced at City Hall; improvements underway at Veterans Park.
 - Installation of a professional electronic communication system between the pump house and water tower.
 - This system, inoperable for more than 12 years, now automatically regulates pump operation based on tank levels, improving efficiency and eliminating the need for manual daily operation.
 - Roadway repairs completed on Will Street, Poplar Creek, and the Water Tank Access Road.
 - Franchise ordinance rewritten.
 - A No Engine Brake ordinance implemented; signage to be installed soon.
 - Historic District signs reinstalled after removal by GDOT.
 - Hiring of a City Clerk, who has brought all the water bills to a current status.
 - Repair of the Firefly Trail water fountain (with assistance from Council Member Gorman).
 - Receipt of \$11,000 from GDOT for street improvements at no cost to the City.
 - Continued work toward the Firefly Trail extension.

- (Item 8) Committee Reports

- Finance & Budget

- City Finance Report for January

- Pinnacle TSPLOST Account

The Mayor did bring to the attention of the Council that we did move \$4100 from the TSPLOST into the Pinnacle General Account to cover the gravel for Poplar, Willow, and the Access Road to the water tank.

The TSPLOST account is a savings account and therefore funds were transferred to the General Account whereby a check could be written to the County for the gravel.

The Mayor did make a side note that he attended a GDOT meeting where those officials stated that if water is coming off of the road and causing a problem, they would fix it. So 30 feet from the center line is GDOT's responsibility to fix. So when it rained last time, the Mayor went out and took pictures to send to GDOT.

- The CD at Commercial Bank has rolled over for another three months.
- The funds from the Georgia Department of Transportation have been deposited.
- The payment to the County for the gravel has been sent.
- 1099s have been sent to all the individuals the city pays.
- We did borrow \$3500 from the Water Savings Account at Commercial Bank because we pay \$2900 to correct the electronics on the pump so it turns on and off properly. But of course, we will pay those monies back as soon as we have it again.
- We have a membership fee due of \$125 to the Oglethorpe County Chamber of Commerce. There was

discussion among the Council as to how the Chamber benefits. Council member Hayes said she would look into this and understand those benefits. The Mayor stated that he would talk with Stephen to find out those benefits.

- House Bill 857 is currently being considered by the Georgia House. If passed, it would allow cities with less than \$2.5 million in annual revenue to file a simplified two-page financial report in place of the extensive audit that is currently required. At present, our City is held to the same reporting standards as much larger municipalities, resulting in an annual audit cost of approximately \$4,000. We are closely monitoring this legislation, as it could be very beneficial. The City would still undergo an audit each year; however, a streamlined process would hopefully reduce the scope of work and, in turn, lower the cost to the City.

- Parks & Recreation

○ Maxeys Women's Club – Christmas Tree Options

- Leta Byrd presented a proposal to install a permanent Christmas tree (*Baby Giant Arborvitae*) where the last tree was placed this past November. The tree grows approximately 10–14 feet tall and 5–6 feet wide and is relatively drought resistant once established. Discussion revealed the presence of a septic tank and an old well near the site. The Mayor recommended filling a nearby sinkhole before planting. Excavated soil may be used for this purpose. A motion was made for the Women's Club to move forward with purchasing the tree as a gift to be planted on City property.

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

The Mayor thanked Ms. Bird for her hard work on this and to please pass his appreciation to the Club.

○ Brightwell Park and the Community Center

- The Mayor explained to the citizens in the room the problem with the electrical at the Community Center, which caused Georgia Power to pull the power from the Building. Due to the recent snow events, utility relocation needed for additional parking has been delayed. Once the power is restored to this building, testing of the HVAC will proceed.

■ Playground Project

- The City is now positioned to apply for grants. Council Members Hayes and Hyatt are preparing applications, including:

- T-Mobile Hometown Grant (up to \$50,000; no match required; deadline March 31).
- Additional grants ranging from \$250 to \$60,000 for playground refurbishment and new equipment.
- Proposed uses include Community Center improvements, parking grading, pavilion additions, and cleanup behind Veterans Park.

Council member Gorman reminded the Council that in the past, the City had some issues with not having a project in their long-term plan or comprehensive plan. Gorman then asked if we knew if this grant was in our current plan. The Mayor said he would look into it. Motion was made to begin the grant application for the T-Mobile grant to be used for the Community Center and common areas.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Carrie Hayes, Council Member; Seconder: Shirley Callahan, Council Member; Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

There was discussion as to when this grant is due, Council member Hyatt stated she would print the application and have it ready at the March Council meeting for all to review.

○ Pavilion

- The Mayor reported that this project is a great example of community volunteerism and noted how good it is to see it completed. He stated that he would like to see the existing concrete tables and benches removed and replaced with picnic tables. This improvement could be included as part of the T-Mobile grant application, especially since some of the current benches are damaged. It was also suggested that the Council consider installing cameras to help prevent vandalism and protect future grant-funded improvements. Council Member Hayes then read a list of individuals who assisted with construction of the pavilion, including: Tracey Tucker, Bill Cabaniss, Tim Andrews, Joe Olowksi, Jeff Posey, Brandon Nunn, Michael Garner, Kyle Andrews, and Mark Whiting. Council Member Hayes also acknowledged the spouses of these individuals, as well as others she may have unintentionally omitted. The Mayor expressed a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed their time and effort to the project.

○ Firefly Trail

- The Mayor reported that there has been a delay from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rail to Trails program. He had not had a response from the project manager from the DNR since December 17. The Mayor has submitted a project plan with corrected dates and we are waiting for our first kickoff meeting. In

the meantime, the Mayor has been talking to contractors so we are ready to submit bids. Mr. John Stephens suggested the whole thing would be part of the contract, not just Maxey's section. so that we can get started as soon as we have the green light. Mr. Stephens went on to state that the Firefly Trail is going to sponsor a Rails to Trails. He will get that date and report back to the Council with this information. The Mayor requested that the Council review the signage along our section of the trail. The Mayor mention that he does like what Greene County has done with their signs and perhaps we could mimic off of them. This will be something added to the agenda at a later date.

○ Maxeys 5K

- There was no formal report this month, although the Mayor noted that he had received his volunteer update email. Council Member Gorman mentioned that sections of the asphalt on the Firefly Trail appear to be heaving due to tree roots and suggested the City consult with someone experienced in asphalt repair, as this condition could present a safety hazard. The Mayor responded that he would like to establish a local Firefly Trail volunteer group to help monitor and address ongoing maintenance needs, such as fire ant mounds and identifying areas requiring repair or correction.

○ Veterans Park

- The Mayor reminded the Council that he had reported last month that several flags needed to be replaced. Council Member Miller stated that the replacement flag is already available and that Warren Gilson was planning to install it. The Mayor asked Council Member Miller to provide an update from the committee regarding the status of the bricks project. Council Member Miller responded that the matter is currently under review.

○ Rotary Club Peace Garden

- The recent winter weekends have delayed some of the cleanup work needed in the Garden. The Mayor reported that he met with Ms. Jean Westmacott regarding the placement of a commemorative rock in the Garden. He has requested bids for the plaque that will be mounted on the rock and has received two bids so far, with a third pending. The cost for a bronze plaque is estimated to be between \$800 and \$1,200. While funding may be tight at that level, the Mayor noted that an aluminum plaque would be a more affordable alternative if necessary. The Mayor also proposed installing a water meter and tap to allow for proper watering of the Garden. The estimated cost for this installation is between \$600 and \$800. Ms. Westmacott informed the Mayor that the Rotary has funds available to pay for the plaque. If so, the City could use the approximately \$1,700 currently in the Peace Garden Account to cover the cost of installing the water meter. Discussion followed regarding responsibility for the ongoing water expense. The Mayor asked the Council whether the City should contribute to the Peace Garden by not charging for water usage or whether the Rotary Club should assume that cost. Additional discussion addressed long-term maintenance responsibilities and whether adding a water source would increase upkeep needs. The Mayor stated that, to his knowledge, there has never been a written agreement outlining maintenance responsibilities. Previous discussions between the Rotary Club and Maxeys volunteers indicated that a plan would be developed, but nothing formal was established. Council Member Hyatt suggested postponing the matter until the next meeting so that a written agreement between the City and the Rotary Club can be prepared addressing maintenance and watering responsibilities. The Council agreed to postpone the discussion until next month's meeting.

- Utilities

○ Water tank area maintenance

- The Mayor reported that the area will be bush hogged this month at no cost to the City. After that, Joe Arnold will add this location to his regular schedule and maintain it monthly to prevent it from becoming overgrown again.
- Currently, the overflow pond drains toward the corner of the fence and down the access road. The City will attempt to reroute the flow so that it drains toward the Woods' or Price's property to the rear. The Mayor is in communication with the Price family regarding this matter.

○ Water Valve Control System Repair

- New solar panels and a cellular gateway have been installed to maintain battery charge and provide remote access via mobile phone. Over the past two weeks, the pump had been manually turned on in the morning and off in the afternoon to prevent overflow. The automatic control system is now operational, set to shut off at 96 feet and turn back on at 80 feet. These levels may be adjusted as needed to ensure the water remains properly mixed so that treatment chemicals do not settle at the bottom. The system will continue to be monitored to ensure it is operating correctly.
- There will likely be additional related expenses as the system is adjusted and finalized. The monitoring

system is filled with a viscous fluid to prevent freezing; however, a leak has been identified. The team is currently researching the issue to determine the next step—whether the system must be drained, sealed, and refilled, or if it can simply be repaired in place. As a result, some additional costs are anticipated. The Mayor noted that, fortunately, freezing weather is likely behind us.

- The Mayor stated that the City should consider having electrical service extended to the site so the system does not rely solely on solar power as its primary source. Georgia Power can run a line from behind the tank near the gate to the location at no cost to the City. However, the City would be responsible for installing a power pole, meter, wiring, and connecting the service to the system. The estimated cost for this work from the current contractor is \$3,850. The Mayor noted that this is an item for the Council to consider at a later date.
- Online payment option
 - The Mayor reported that letters were sent to all water customers offering the option to receive their water bills via email. Eighteen customers have requested this service so far. The Mayor also stated that the online water payment system is now active. Citizens in attendance asked who is responsible for the cost of this service. It was explained that customers pay a convenience fee of \$2.50 or 4% of the transaction (whichever is greater), and there is no cost to the City.
- Water Accounts
 - The Mayor reported that three City-related meters—the Community Club, City Hall, and the water fountain on the Firefly Trail—have never been read or billed. These meters do not have a monthly base fee, nor are they monitored for usage on a regular basis. The Council discussed whether to continue waiving fees for these meters. Council Member Hyatt suggested addressing this issue at next month’s meeting, at the same time the Council considers adding a meter to the Peace Garden..
 - The Mayor explained that Mr. Adam Boswell is the personnel responsible for all water sampling for the City. Due to the need for further clarification on his proposals, Mr. Boswell agreed to charge prior rates for January. The Mayor successfully negotiated a reduction in Mr. Boswell’s proposed fees from \$1,500 and \$1,100 to \$1,100 and \$800:
 - The \$1,100 option covers all testing services and mailing of samples.
 - The \$800 option requires the City to pay for mailing the samples, while Mr. Boswell handles the testing.Additionally, Mr. Boswell’s hourly rates went up from \$35 an hour to an updated rate as follows: \$50 per hour for his work, \$25 per hour for any assistant, \$50 per hour for use of his equipment, and the meter reading fee remains \$1.25 per meter. Council discussion focused on the mailing process and the number of personnel involved. It was agreed that Mr. Boswell would handle all aspects of the testing himself, without adding a third person. The Mayor recommended establishing an annual contract with Mr. Boswell to formalize the arrangement with him. A motion was made to the \$1,100 per month option, pending Mr. Boswell’s verification of an annual contract acceptable to both parties.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Carrie Hyatt, Council Member; Seconder: Doug Miller, Council Member; Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

- Water fees evaluation and Water System Usage Accounts
 - As Mayor mentioned before in this meeting our water revenues are not enough to sustain the system. The Council and the Mayor have had two working session and have gone through all the numbers. What the Mayor is proposing for the Council to consider are two options:
 - Option 1 would raise the base rate to \$25 and increase the water rate to .50 cent per 1000 gallons
 - Option 2 would raise the base rate to \$30 and increase the water rate to .50 center per 1000 gallonsThe Mayor presented two water rate scenarios to the Council, providing each member with sample copies of their current bills under each option. He reviewed the differences between the scenarios and explained how each would impact the 2027 Water Budget. Council members discussed the options at length, particularly in light of Mr. Boswell’s recent rate increase. The Mayor noted that the proposed increase was reflected in the figures provided to the Council. He also explained that the City’s current loan payment will be fully paid off by the end of 2026 and that the numbers include \$15,000 for the annual cleaning of the water tank. Citizens attending the meeting asked questions regarding the tank cleaning and whether the work is competitively bid. The Mayor responded that two bids have been obtained so far. The Mayor emphasized the importance of informing water customers about any approved rate changes by the last week of February. Citizens expressed appreciation for the Council’s transparency in explaining the considerations before deciding on a water rate increase. A motion was made to increase the base (inside the city limits) to \$30 per month and the water usage fee to .50 per 1000 gallons and to increase the base (outside the city limits) to \$38 per month and the water

usage fee to .50 per 1000 gallons.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Danny Gorman, Council Member; Seconder: Carrie Hyatt, Council Member;
Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

The Mayor thanked everyone and addressed the citizens that if anyone needed data for this increase to please just let him know. He will be happy to supply it.

- Public Works & Infrastructure
 - o Septic Service (City Hall & Community Center)
 - The Mayor reported that we have found the septic tanks at the City Hall and at the Community Center. Citizen Ms. Bird reported to the Council that the septic tank at the Community Center does back up. She has hosted events there and has had problems. The Mayor reminded the Council that this does fall within our budgetted maintenance for the year. The company who found the tanks is giving us an estimated cost of \$500-\$750 to clean the tanks out and if they run into any problems, an estimated cost of \$500-\$750 to repair those problems. There was a motion to pay up to \$2500 to clean out the two tanks and investigate the old well that was uncovered.

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Doug Miller, Council Member; Seconder: Shirley Callahan, Council Member;
Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, and Miller.

- o Water Tank Access Road
 - The road has been graveled.
- o Nuisance Properties – Nuisance Buildings
 - Letters have been mailed asking them to clean up their
- o City Properties that need attention
 - The Mayor plans to get with each Council member to see who is assigned to what building which includes: City Hall, Firehall, Screen Building, Old Firehall, Community Center.
- Administration
 - o Policy Review

The Mayor stated this would be on going process through the year. He has a couple more to add to his list before presenting to the Council.
 - o Sheriff & Municipal Judge Agreements
 - o The Mayor provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Council. He explained that the County's attorney has requested that the City update its ordinances to align with the County's noise and vicious animal ordinances. This alignment will simplify enforcement for County Deputies, ensuring they do not have to navigate multiple differing ordinances. The Mayor will start this next month.

- (Item 9) Adjourn. Having no other business, a motion was made to Adjourn.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:28pm

Results: approved (unanimous); Mover: Carrie Hayes, Council Member; Seconder: Shirley Callahan, Council Member;
Ayes: Callahan, Gorman, Hayes, Hyatt, Miller.