City of Jasper

200 Burnt Mountain Road
Jasper, GA 30143
MINUTES | REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, October 5, 2026, 6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT
Mayor Kirk Raffield
Jim Looney
John Foust
Brandon Hannah
Tony Davis
Steve Lawrence

STAFF
Brandon Douglas
Kim Goldener
Lorrie Waters
Lindsey Williams
Matt Dawkins
John Sherrer
Mary Elizabeth Burgess
Joshua Davis
Carly Glaze

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE
See Attachment "A"

MEMBERS ABSENT

LEGAL COUNSEL
David Syfan

PRESS
Mari Livsey – Know Pickens

Angela Reinhardt – Pickens Progress

AGENDA ITEM: Call Meeting to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield
Mayor Raffield called the meeting to order @ 6:00pm and asked Council Member John Foust to confirm the presence of a quorum. Mr. Brian Rittenberry delivered the invocation, followed by City Manager Brandon Douglas leading the Pledge of Allegiance.	
ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE** / **DEADLINE**
N/A	N/A / N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Adopt Agenda	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield
Discussion: Mayor Raffield **Conclusion:** Mayor Raffield called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Council Member Brandon Hannah made the motion to adopt the agenda as presented and Council Member Tony Davis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.	
ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE** / **DEADLINE**
Approved	N/A / N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Proclamations	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield
1. Serve Pickens Day (October 24, 2026): Proclaimed October 24, 2026, as Serve Pickens Day in Pickens County and the City of Jasper, recognizing the volunteer initiative supporting 18 local non-profit organizations. 2. Georgia Marble Festival Days (October 3–4, 2026): Proclaimed the weekend of October 3–4, 2026, as Georgia Marble Festival Days in honor of the 44th annual festival hosted by the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center.	
ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE** / **DEADLINE**
N/A	N/A / N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Comprehensive Water & Sewer Utility Update	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield, City Manager Brandon Douglas and Deputy City Manager Kim Goldener

- **$15 Million GEFA Hurricane Resiliency Award:** Mayor Raffield formally announced that on October 1, GEFA awarded the city $15 million under the Hurricane Resiliency Funding Program to construct a dedicated water transmission main connecting to an underground water supply source in Gilmer County (Ellijay-Gilmer County Water & Sewer Authority). Terms include 50% principal forgiveness ($7.5 million grant) and a 20-year, 0% interest loan on the remaining $7.5 million.
- **$8 Million GEFA Loan Projects Status (Deputy City Manager Kim Goldener):**
  - *Clean Water (Sewer):* Master Lift Station project contractor UWS has cleared heavy rock along North Mineral Springs Road, is finishing gravity mains/manholes, and will proceed to off-road force mains. A road restoration change order is anticipated in November due to poor underlying

road base. Sanitary Sewer Collection System Rehab contractor Inliner continues CCTV inspections, SCADA installations across lift stations, and manhole repairs.

Drinking Water: The Woodlane Drive Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation (contractor Rehab Construction Co.) is undergoing structural concrete, electrical, and valve upgrades, with filter and media replacements scheduled during lower winter demand flows. Distribution upgrades are targeting interconnect strengthening and line replacements, including coordinating water and stormwater solutions in the Fox Run subdivision.

- **Source Redundancy & Flow Limits:** Goldener explained that 75% of Jasper's water is withdrawn directly from Long Swamp Creek (surface) and the nearby marble mine wells (groundwater), which sit within 500 feet of each other. During extreme drought, statutory downstream flow protection rules (7Q10) restrict creek withdrawals to 800,000 gallons per day, creating an urgent need for geographical redundancy.
- **State Route 53 Utility Relocations:** GDOT's widening project requires relocating water and sewer infrastructure, estimated by engineers at $5 million. The city has formally requested 100% utility relocation aid from the State of Georgia to protect local ratepayer funds.
- **Financial Structure & Water Loss (City Manager Brandon Douglas):** Clarified that 2025 audited water loss was 44%, which does not yet reflect 2026 repairs like the $550,000 SPLOST-funded line replacement at Twin Mountain Lake. Douglas announced that the city is formally **suspending any due diligence regarding the potential privatization of the water and sewer utility** to focus entirely on executing the GEFA Gilmer County water line project.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Consent Agenda **PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield

1. Minutes from 08.27.2026 Council Work Session
2. Minutes from 09.14.2026 Regular Council Meeting
3. Jasper Police Department MOU Radio Tower Site Use – Bent Tree Property Owners Association

Conclusion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented and Council Member Brandon Hannah seconded. The motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Approved	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Public Hearing #2 – Tax Millage Rate **PRESENTER:** City Management

Public Hearing opened @ 6:20pm

- **Staff Presentation:** Finance Director Lindsey Williams and City Manager Brandon Douglas presented details regarding the proposed millage rate of 7.636 mills (a 1.5 mill increase over the current 6.136 mills, calculated against the rollback rate of 6.092 mills, resulting in an advertised 25.34% property tax increase). Williams noted that property taxes generate roughly 30% of general fund revenues, with personnel and benefits accounting for 80% of operating expenses. An estimated $130,000 increase in health/liability insurance and competitive wage adjustments across public safety require revenue stabilization. Zero capital equipment purchases are planned. Williams reviewed tax calculations and highlighted the state-funded Homeowners Tax Relief Grant (reducing assessed values up to $18,000 for qualifying homestead properties). Douglas noted that on a $200,000 fair market value home, the 1.5 mill adjustment equals roughly $10 per month ($120 annually).

- **Public Comments:** None.

Mayor Raffield closed the public hearing, noting the third and final public hearing and millage rate adoption are scheduled for October 15, 2026, at 5:30 PM.

Public Hearing closed @ 6:50pm

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: New Business #1 Consideration of the Annual Veterans Day Parade by the American Legion Post 149	**PRESENTER:** Deputy City Manager – Kim Goldener

Discussion: Annual Veterans Day Parade by American Legion Post 149 is scheduled for Wednesday, November 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM, beginning on Sanders Street, proceeding down North Main Street, and turning onto Stegall Drive to conclude at the Veterans Memorial in Lee Newton Park. The start of the staging for the parade begins at 8:30 AM.

Conclusion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion. Council Member Steve Lawrence made the motion to approve the Annual Veterans Day Parade and Council Member John Foust seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Approved	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: New Item #2 Consideration of Soccer League at Lee Newton Park - Georgia Impact Soccer Club	**PRESENTER:** Deputy City Manager – Kim Goldener

Discussion: Georgia Impact Soccer Club requested use of the open flat area north of Veterans Memorial Boulevard in Lee Newton Park for five Saturday morning sessions (Oct 17, Oct 24, Oct 31, Nov 7, Nov 14; 9:30 AM–11:30 AM) and Wednesday evenings. The club provides all goals and equipment with no permanent field markings or city storage needed.

Conclusion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion. Council Member Brandon Hannah made the motion to approve the fall soccer league for both Wednesday and Saturday dates as requested and Council Member Steve Lawrence seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Approved	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: New Item #3 Consideration of Resolution 2026-08 – Local Control through City Governance on behalf of the City of Jasper, Georgia	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield

Discussion: Mayor Raffield introduced Resolution No. 2026-08 affirming municipal sovereignty and local governance, authorizing the local legislative delegation and city officials to oppose any efforts to dissolve or consolidate the City of Jasper into Pickens County government without city consent. Raffield stated the resolution was prompted by unilateral remarks regarding local government consolidation made during a recent joint SDS meeting.

Conclusion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-08 Affirming Municipal Sovereignty and Local Governance and Council Member John Foust seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Approved	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Committee Report Updates	**PRESENTER:** Council Members

Development & Local Infrastructure – Council Member John Foust and Council Member Brandon Hannah
Nothing to Report at this time.

Downtown Development Authority – Councilmember Brandon Hannah outlined the 2027 strategic shift for the DDA away from expensive event execution (such as Downtown Live) toward sustainable economic development, facade grants, downtown signage/wayfinding, and small business support.

Finance & Administration – Council Member Jim Looney and Council Member Tony Davis
Councilmember Jim Looney reported that through August, general fund expenditures exceeded revenues by $287,000 (anticipated to balance as major tax disbursements arrive in October), while the water/sewer and sanitation funds remain slightly ahead of expenditures.

- Item

Enterprise – Council Member Jim Looney and Council Member Steve Lawrence
Council Members Jim Looney and Steve Lawrence reiterated that water utility replacement requires extensive multi-million-dollar capital funding that cannot occur overnight, urging patience as crews continue daily field maintenance and line repairs.

Parks & Properties – Council Member John Foust and Council Member Tony Davis
Councilmember Tony Davis commended Carly Glaze for coordinating youth placement initiatives, including high school art murals on Stegall Alley (ribbon cutting October 29 at 4:00 PM), botanical labeling at Doris Wigington Park, a planned mosaic at Peace Park, movie nights in the park (Hocus Pocus on Halloween; Elf at Christmas), and celebrated ballfield renovations at City Park by Mountain City Athletics.

Public Safety – Council Member Brandon Hannah and Council Member Steve Lawrence
Discussion: Councilmember Brandon Hannah confirmed approval of an MOU for emergency radio tower access at Bent Tree and reminded residents of "Burn-tober" outdoor burn safety rules.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: City Manager Comments — **PRESENTER:** City Manager – Brandon Douglas

- Reported on upcoming joint service delivery meetings with Pickens County regarding fire services.
- Noted that public works will mow right-of-ways along North Main Street on Wednesday morning.
- Reiterated that the $15M GEFA award provides the exact capital needed to secure drinking water independence and officially halts any pursuit of utility privatization.
- Confirmed the third millage rate public hearing on October 15 at 5:30 PM, followed by council adoption and a 2027 budget work session.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: City Council Comments — **PRESENTER:** City Council Members

Councilmember Tony Davis: Expressed gratitude to Public Works Director Josh Davis and field crews for ongoing maintenance of city infrastructure, and commended Tracy Jones for organizing community non-profit fundraisers.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Mayor Comments — **PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield

- Reminded residents of the community Town Hall on Thursday at 6:00 PM at the Pickens County Community Center.
- Commended council for supporting youth recreational partnerships (Mountain City Athletics and Georgia Impact Soccer) despite the city not operating a municipal recreation department.
- Highlighted major ongoing investments, including the $18.5M wastewater treatment plant expansion, fire station 14 opening, and Perrow Park development.
- Clarified that Jasper produces and treats 75% of its own drinking water, unlike neighboring municipalities that purchase 100% of their supply.
- Pledged continued support and defense of city employees, asking the public to treat field crews with kindness and respect.
- Announced a dedicated email address—councilquestions@jasper-ga.us—created for citizens to submit inquiries and receive answers from staff and council.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Session	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield

Discussion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:33pm for discussion of Real Estate and Legal. Council Member Jim Looney made a motion to go into Executive Session. Council Member Brandon Hannah provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Raffield made a motion to end Executive Session at 8:49pm and go back into council session. Council Member Brandon Hannah made a motion and Council Member Jim Looney provided a second. Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Approved	N/A	N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Adjourn	**PRESENTER:** Mayor Kirk Raffield

Discussion:

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to adjourn at 8:49pm.

Council Member Brandon Hannah made a motion to adjourn. Council Member John Foust provided a second. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Adjourned	N/A	N/A

Mayor, Kirk D. Raffield

City Clerk, Lorrie Waters

CITY OF JASPER CORPORATE SEAL GEORGIA

Attachment " A"

PLEASE SIGN IN

JASPER
City Council Meeting
SIGN IN ROSTER
October 5, 2026

PRINT NAME	ADDRESS/OR BUSINESS AFFILIATION
Samuel Sly	JPC
Audra Bailey	3292 Refuge Rd
Brian Rittenberry	10 S Main
Denise Vier	Jasper
Tracy Jones	Jasper
Barbara Moorman	Jasper
Penny Dicus	Jasper
Phebe Holden	Jasper
Cal McCalman	GMC
Jon + Peggy Gilleland	Talking Rock
Valerie Crosted	Jasper