

**MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)**

Livestream: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofKennesaw/>

August 5, 2024

6:30 PM

Present	Mayor Derek Easterling Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones Councilmember Madelyn Orochena Councilmember Tracey Viars Councilmember Pat Ferris Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez City Clerk Lea Alvarez City Manager Jeff Drobney City Attorney Randall Bentley, Sr.
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1. Invocation

City Attorney Randall Bentley, Sr. led the Invocation.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

City Resident Andrew Bramlett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Call to Order

Mayor Easterling called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

4. Announcements

- A. If you are not able to attend a meeting in-person and would like to provide public comment on a specific agenda item, you can email kennesawcouncil@kennesaw-ga.gov no later than 6:00 PM the night of the regular meeting. Your comments on a specific agenda item will be read aloud or grouped into categories for the record. **Facebook Live is not monitored for public comment.**

5. Presentations

6. Public Comment/Business from the Floor

6:31 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

No comments.

6:32 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

7. Old Business

8. New Business

A. License Review Board: Due Cause Hearings

Consideration to ratify actions by the License Review Board from their due cause hearings held on July 31, 2024, for ABC Liquor Co, Inc d/b/a Bottle Shop (2774 North Cobb Parkway); RS Diamond Jubilee LLC d/b/a Cobb Food Mart (2651 North Cobb Parkway); Damanis Food and Fuel Inc., d/b/a Stop 2 Go Shell (2515 North Cobb Parkway); and Racetrac Petroleum, Inc. d/b/a RaceTrac #052 (1625 Old Highway 41); and to receive the meeting minutes.

City Clerk Lea Alvarez presented the actions by the License Review Board from their due cause hearings held on July 31, 2024, for ABC Liquor Co, Inc d/b/a Bottle Shop (2774 North Cobb Parkway); RS Diamond Jubilee LLC d/b/a Cobb Food Mart (2651 North Cobb Parkway); Damanis Food and Fuel Inc., d/b/a Stop 2 Go Shell (2515 North Cobb Parkway); and Racetrac Petroleum, Inc. d/b/a RaceTrac #052 (1625 Old Highway 41); and to receive the meeting minutes. The incidents which formed the basis of the hearings were the furnishing of, providing of, or possessing of alcoholic beverages by an underage person on June 24, 2024, as a result of compliance checks conducted by the Kennesaw Police Department, in violation of City of Kennesaw Alcohol Code § 6-89. RS Diamond Jubilee LLC d/b/a Cobb Food Mart also violated § 6-70 due to an employee possessing an expired alcohol server permit.

Prior to the hearings, the parties reached consent agreements that were submitted to the License Review Board for approval. The terms of each agreement are as follows: a 30-day suspension of ABC Liquor Co, Inc. d/b/a Bottle Shop effective August 2, 2024; a 7-day suspension of RS Diamond Jubilee LLC d/b/a/ Cobb Food Mart effective August 3, 2024; a 30-day suspension of Damanis Food and Fuel Inc., d/b/a Stop 2 Go Shell effective August 3, 2024; and a 30-day suspension of Racetrac Petroleum, Inc. d/b/a RaceTrac #052 effective August 3, 2024. All rights of appeal were waived. The License Review Board approved all respective agreements 2-0-1 (Board Member Thornton was absent).

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Jones to ratify the actions of the License Review Board hearing held on July 31, 2024, and to receive the meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Viars.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

9. Committee and Board Reports

10. Public Hearing(s)

A. Third and Final Public Hearing: Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to adopt the proposed Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate

Property Tax Administrator Latisha Gunn presented a resolution to adopt the proposed Maintenance and Operation (M&O) millage rate. Ms. Gunn shared that the City of Kennesaw is proposing a millage rate of 7.75 mills for M&O, which is the same as last year. The dates of the public hearings, the current 2024 Tax Digest, and the 5-year History of Levy were properly advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on July 20, 2024, whereas the other advertisements were published on both July 20 and July 27, 2024, in accordance with O.C.G.A § 48-5-32. The first and second public hearings were held on July 29, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. and August 5, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., respectively.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to approve a resolution adopting the proposed Maintenance and Operation (M&O) millage rate of 7.75 mills. Seconded by Councilmember Jones.

6:35 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

No comments.

6:36 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

Councilmember Ferris stated that six years ago, the City had Tax Allocation Notes (TANs) and very little money in the reserves. The Council at that time set financial goals to get the City in better shape. As the City no longer operates on TANs and has a healthy number in the reserves, he believes this is a good time to consider rolling back the millage rate.

Councilmember Ferris made a motion to amend the main motion on the floor to reduce the proposed M&O millage rate by 0.25 mills. Mayor Pro Tem Jones seconded.

Councilmember Viars shared that she does not think it is a good time to do a rollback as there is still a lot of uncertainty surrounding House Bill 489. Further, the City is looking at increasing costs for projects, attracting and retaining talent, etc. She asked Finance Director Gina Auld to explain the Homestead Exemption and its impact.

Vote taken, amended motion denied 2-3 (Councilmember Orochena, Councilmember Gutierrez, and Councilmember Viars opposed). Amended motion failed.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to approve [**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-34**](#) adopting the proposed M&O millage rate of 7.75 mills. Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

B. Third and Final Public Hearing: Bond Millage Rate

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to adopt the proposed Bond Millage Rate

Ms. Gunn presented a resolution to adopt the proposed Bond millage rate of 1.5 mills, which is the same as last year. The Bond millage rate is levied to fund the debt service

on the \$15 million Recreation and Traffic Safety Bonds that were approved by the voters on September 21, 2004. The dates of the public hearings, the current 2024 Tax Digest, and the 5-year History of Levy were properly advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on July 20, 2024, whereas the other advertisements were published on both July 20 and July 27, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. and August 5, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., respectively.

Motion by Councilmember Orochena to approve [RESOLUTION NO. 2024-35](#) to adopt the Bond millage rate of 1.5 mills. Seconded by Councilmember Viars.

6:42 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

No comments.

6:43 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

11. Consent Agenda

- A. **Minutes: July 8, 2024 Work Session**
Approval of the July 8, 2024, City Council work session minutes
- B. **Minutes: July 8, 2024 Special Called City Council FY 25 Budget Work Session**
Approval of the July 8, 2024, special called FY 25 budget work session.
- C. **Minutes: July 15, 2024 Regular Meeting**
Approval of the July 15, 2024, City Council regular meeting minutes.
- D. **Minutes: July 15, 2024 Executive Session**
Approval of the July 15, 2024, City Council executive session minutes.
- E. **Resolution: New Bank Account for the National Opioid Settlement Funds**
Consideration for approval of a Resolution authorizing the opening of a new bank account for the National Opioid Settlement funds.

[RESOLUTION NO. 2024-36](#)

- F. **Bail Bond License: Empire Surety Group**
Consideration for approval of a Bail Bond license for Empire Surety Group, Inc. d/b/a A 24 Hour Bail Bonding located at 2248 Austell Road SW Marietta, GA 30008. Applicant: Robert Corley.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Jones to approve the Consent Agenda engross. Seconded by Councilmember Ferris.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

12. General and Administrative

A. Resolution: Paid Parental Leave

Consideration for approval to adopt Section 11.14 in the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual regarding paid parental leave.

City Manager Jeff Drobney presented a resolution to adopt Section 11.14 of the City of Kennesaw's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual regarding paid parental leave. This policy would grant all employees the opportunity to take up to six consecutive weeks of paid parental leave for the adoption or birth of a child. Eligible employees would be those employed full time with at least one year of service.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Jones to approve [RESOLUTION NO. 2024-37](#) adopting Section 11.14 of the City of Kennesaw's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual regarding paid parental leave as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Orochena.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

13. Public Safety

A. Crime Statistics: June 2024

Chief Bill Westenberger presented the June 2024 crime statistics [See **Exhibit A**].

Motion by Councilmember Viars to receive the June 2024 crime statistics as presented. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jones.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

14. Information Technology

15. Public Works and Building Maintenance

16. Recreation and Culture

17. Community Development

18. Public Comment/Business from the Floor

6:47 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

ANDREW BRAMLETT [City Resident]: Mr. Bramlett shared a local history story about the origins of an Olympic-sized pool located in Pinetree Country Club [See **Exhibit B**].

6:48 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

19. City Manager's Report

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

20. Mayor's Report

- A. Mayor and Council (re)appointments to Boards and Commissions. This item is for (re)appointments made by the Mayor to any Board, Committee, Authority, or Commission requiring an appointment to fill any vacancies, resignations, and to create or dissolve boards and commissions, as deemed necessary.

21. Council Reports & Discussions

A. Public Comment: Work Session

Consideration to approve adding a public comment section to work sessions.

Councilmember Orochena asked the Council to consider adding a public comment section to the work session.

Councilmember Viars spent last week watching recorded meetings of various cities to see how they conduct their meetings and how possibly we might be able to do better. She looked at their agendas as well as noticed none of the cities allowed for public comment during their work session. Councilmember Viars explained that work sessions are an opportunity to plan the regular meeting and interact with staff in a more informal setting. The Council needs time to digest information received during a work session. A work session has a distinct feeling and purpose and the regular meeting has a distinct feeling and purpose. She fears intertwining the two will confuse the public as to which kind of meeting they are attending. The City of Kennesaw is the only other city besides Acworth which offers two opportunities to provide public comment at the regular meeting.

Councilmember Gutierrez referred back to his comment last week that adding public comment to work sessions is providing an opportunity for residents to speak to the Council regarding what is troubling them, which has more of an impact than sending an email or making a phone call.

Mayor Easterling reiterated that the public has two opportunities to speak during the regular meeting.

Councilmember Ferris stated that people have many opportunities already to speak with the Council. Much like tonight, we have public comment at the beginning of the agenda, during the public hearings, and a public comment section at the end. We do so much already to be transparent and to offer communication. Echoing what Councilmember Viars said, the work session agenda is to set the agenda for meetings like tonight. He does not see any valid reason to add the public comment section.

Motion by Councilmember Orochena to approve adding a public comment section to work sessions. Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Mayor Easterling asked the Council if they wanted to add the public comment section on a trial basis for three months to see what kind of comments the City receives.

Motion by Councilmember Ferris to amend the main motion to approve adding a public

comment section to work sessions for a trial period of four months ending November 18, 2024. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jones.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

Mayor Easterling said there is now an amended motion adding public comment to work sessions for a trial period of four months that would be re-evaluated at the November 18, 2024, regular meeting. This motion is now the main motion on the floor.

MARY WHITLOCK [City Resident]: Ms. Whitlock stated she is a long-term resident and attends most meetings in the city. Most of the comments that the Council is looking for at the work session would be answered if people attended some of the board and commission meetings, such as the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, etc. Ms. Whitlock requested that if the Council is going to allow comments at work sessions, that they apply the same boundaries as they do for public comment at regular meetings. She would like to see more people attend the board and commission meetings because then you would not need public comment at the work sessions.

Vote taken, amended motion approved 4-1 (Councilmember Viars opposed). Amended motion passed.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones is extremely excited about paid parental leave for the City of Kennesaw. When he had a meeting with Dr. Drobney a few months ago, he was frustrated because his employer only allowed him 70% of his pay during paternal leave. In this economy, with one income, it was a struggle to make it through for his family. Mayor Pro Tem Jones wants to let the staff know that the Council is here to support them through such an important time in their lives.

Councilmember Gutierrez is looking forward to Pigs and Peaches!

Councilmember Orochena said she is keeping it short and sweet because it is her brother's birthday, and it is about time to eat cake.

Councilmember Ferris offered prayers for people in north Florida and south Georgia as Hurricane Debby rolls through those areas. He highlighted that the Kennesaw Police Department's National Night Out is tomorrow night and encouraged everyone to attend.

Councilmember Viars is also excited about parental leave and thinks it is a great benefit that will attract talent here to the City of Kennesaw. She also thanked Gina Auld and Finance department for their work on the millage rate hearings.

22. Executive Session

Pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A 50-14-3, the City Council could, at any time during the meeting, vote to close the public meeting and move to executive session to discuss matters relating to litigation, legal actions and/or communications from the City Attorney; and/or personnel matters; and/or real estate matters.

23. Adjourn

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Monday, August 12, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend or view via Facebook Live.

Lea Alvarez, City Clerk



June 2024 Crime Statistics

Summary

June 2024 Group A Offenses (58) increased by 41% compared to June 2023 (41). Assault Offenses accounted for 55% of crimes reported in June 2024. June 2024 Motor Vehicle Theft (5) increased 500% compared to June 2023 (1). June 2024 Sex Offenses (0) decreased 100% compared to June 2023 (3). YTD 2024 crimes (340) are about even with YTD 2023 (341).

June 2024 arrests (110) increased by 50% compared to June 2023 (73). YTD 2024 adult arrests (580) increased by 13% compared to YTD 2023 (515).

In June 2024 1,078 traffic stops were conducted resulting in 629 written warnings and 644 citations.

YTD 2024 traffic accidents (523) decreased 8% compared to YTD 2023 (570). YTD 2024 18% of traffic accidents included injuries compared to 21% in YTD 2023.

Crimes	June 2024	June 2023	YTD (01/01/2024) – (06/30/2024)	YTD (01/01/2023) – (06/30/2023)
Assault Offenses	32	24	192	184
Motor Vehicle Theft	5	1	12	5
Burglary	4	2	18	13
Homicide Offenses	0	0	1	0
Larceny	16	10	107	125
Sex Offenses	0	3	8	8
Robbery	1	1	2	6
Total	58	41	340	341

	June 2024	June 2023	YTD (01/01/2024) – (06/30/2024)	YTD (01/01/2023) – (06/30/2023)
Dispatched Calls for Service	783 (-12)	795	4560 (-446)	5006
Self-Initiated Activity	1,352 (+449)	903	6821 (+483)	6338
Traffic Citations	644 (+76)	568	3446 (-1161)	4607
Traffic Warnings*	629 (+284)	345	3367 (+1506)	1861
Arrests*	110 (+37)	73	580 (+65)	515

*Warnings do not include verbal warnings

*Arrest statistics does not include juveniles

Bill Westenberger
Chief of Police



Kennesaw Police Department
2539 J. O. Stephenson Ave., Kennesaw, GA, 30144
911 Call Center: (770) 422-2505
Criminal Investigations Division: (770) 429-4533



KENNESAW HISTORY

Olympic Sized Pool

Pinetree Country Club pool,
c. 1960

Image from Joe Bozeman



With the Olympics taking place in Paris, it seemed appropriate to focus today on the Olympic sized swimming pool in the Kennesaw area. Located at Pinetree Country Club, it was one of the largest pools in Georgia at the time it was built.

Land was purchased for the Cobb County Recreation Area and O. B. Keeler Golf Course in 1958 and 1959. The plan was for the golf course and pool to be managed by the county. By April of 1960, the pool was “99 percent complete.” It opened on June 5, and the *Marietta Daily Journal* described the pool as “one of the nation’s most modern.” According to a promotional brochure, it was one of only five pools across the nation that met Olympic specifications. Because it could be used for swimming competitions, a grandstand to hold 1,300 people was built beside it. Within a month of opening, the pool had seen over 11,000 visitors.

In 1960, the project became a divisive issue in the 1960 election for county commissioner. That, combined with integration of public golf courses, caused the project to be sold in 1962 to private developers. Renamed Pinetree Country Club, the pool is still used and looks much like it did brand new.

Presented by Andrew J. Bramlett at the August 5, 2024,
City of Kennesaw Mayor & Council Meeting

Names and Addresses will be disclosed in the Permanent Minutes of the
City of Kennesaw

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS LEGIBLE AND CLEAR

**Mayor & Council Regular Meeting
8/5/2024**

Public Comment Sign-in

	Name	Address	Topic
1	Andrew J. Bramlett	2990 Commercial Ct.	Local history
2	Mary Whitcomb	resident	
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