

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

**Livestream: [www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/](http://www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/)  
April 21, 2025  
6:30 PM**

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

**1. Invocation**

City Attorney Randall Bentley, Sr. led the Invocation.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Kennesaw Mountain High School student Felicia Vuu led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Call to Order**

Mayor Easterling called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**4. Announcements**

**5. Presentations**

**6. Public Comment/Business from the Floor**

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

TIMOTHY HEYING [City Resident]: Mr. Heying shared that a lot of people expressed to him that they could not be present at tonight's meeting, but are upset about the changes to public comment. Many are already uncomfortable with coming up to the podium to state their name and address on camera, and the changes make it much less likely that they will come and speak at all. Mr. Heying thinks that the City could use more formalized rules around public comment, but the ones that have been suggested seem restrictive. He requested more details as to the timing of the changes to public comment.

[Councilmember Orochena recused herself from the following comment related to item 15. A].

DEAN KLEIN [City Resident]: Mr. Klein said that it has come to his attention that the City is considering rejecting the offer to purchase the right of way at 2995 and 2997 North Main Street, but has agreed to reduce the price to the original appraisal. Mr. Klein had a couple of comments about the offer. He wanted to revisit the fact that this land should have been deeded to this property many decades ago when the purpose of the right of way was no longer necessary. After finding out the land was not theirs to maintain and that the City did not plan to maintain it any differently, the Kleins began the abandonment process. Based on the comments in the appraisal, any value that is assessed is only for the property if it is attached to their property. Further, they feel as though the diminished value of the appraisal, which is approximately \$2,500, is nowhere near adequate to cover the remediation costs to rectify the current condition. A more accurate cost would exceed \$7,000. One of the main benefits to the City is that it absolves any maintenance responsibilities and allows the Kleins to beautify this area as a gateway to downtown Kennesaw. He requested the City Council accept their offer as presented.

[Councilmember Orochena returned to the meeting].

SEBASTIAN RINEHART: Mr. Rinehart stated that in 2019, he raised his right hand and swore to defend the Constitution of the United States of America. He is concerned about the changes to the rules regarding public comment. As a member of the military, he recognizes that rules are important; however, denying someone the right to speak or to hold their representatives accountable is concerning. In the military, one of the things they are taught is extreme accountability. As a non-commissioned officer with soldiers that report directly to him, if any of his people do something against rules or regulations, he is held accountable for them because he represents them. Mr. Rinehart would hope that those below him in the chain of command would hold him accountable as well. He does not want to be in a community where that is not a right.

6:40 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

## **7. Old Business**

## **8. New Business**

### **A. Resolution: Update to Mayor and Council Meeting Procedures**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to update the Mayor and Council Meeting Procedures document.

Mayor Easterling stated the resolution was regarding administrative changes to meeting procedures with no intention of affecting freedom of speech.

He requested a motion to withdraw the item and revisit the meeting procedures at a later date.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to withdraw item 8. A. Seconded by Councilmember Orochena.

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

## **9. Committee and Board Reports**

## **10. Public Hearing(s)**

### **A. Ordinance: Amendment to Events, Parades, and Public Gatherings**

Consideration for approval of an Ordinance to amend Chapter 78, "Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Places," Article III, "Events, Parades, and Public Gatherings," as prescribed by the Code of Ordinances of the City of Kennesaw, Georgia.

Mayor Easterling stated that this ordinance would be postponed to the June 30, 2025, City Council work session and the July 7, 2025, City Council regular meeting. He opened the floor for public comment since the hearing was advertised.

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

No comment.

6:44 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Ferris to postpone the approval of an Ordinance to amend Chapter 78, "Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Places," Article III, "Events, Parades, and Public Gatherings," of the Code of Ordinances to the June 30, 2025, City Council work session and the July 7, 2025, City Council regular meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Jones.

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

## **11. Consent Agenda**

### **A. Minutes: March 31, 2025 Work Session**

Approval of the March 31, 2025, City Council work session minutes.

### **B. Minutes: March 31, 2025 Executive Session**

Approval of the March 31, 2025, City Council executive session minutes.

### **C. Minutes: April 7, 2025 Regular Meeting**

Approval of the April 7, 2025, City Council regular meeting minutes.

### **D. Minutes: April 7, 2025 Executive Session**

Approval of the April 7, 2025, City Council executive session minutes.

### **E. Resolution: Master Fee Schedule Updates**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to update various portions of the Master Fee Schedule.

**[Resolution No. 2025-27](#)**

**F. Report: 2022-2024 Strategic Goals**

Update and close out of the City of Kennesaw's 2022-2024 Strategic Goals.

**G. Resolution: 2025-2027 Strategic Goals**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution approving the City of Kennesaw's 2025-2027 Strategic Goals.

**Resolution No. 2025-28**

**H. Resolution: Chalker Park Design Proposal**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution authorizing the purchase of professional services from Patterson & Dewar Engineers for the phased design of the new Chalker Park.

**Resolution No. 2025-29**

**I. Resolution: Playground Expansion**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution authorizing GameTime to complete playground expansions at Kennesaw Station and Adams Park.

**Resolution No. 2025-30**

**J. Resolution: Intergovernmental Agreement with Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources regarding the appropriation of \$500,000 to be used for historic preservation of the Hiram Butler House.

**Resolution No. 2025-26**

Motion by Councilmember Gutierrez to approve the Consent Agenda engross.  
Seconded by Councilmember Jones.

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

**12. General and Administrative**

**13. Public Safety**

**A. Crime Statistics: March 2025**

Consideration to accept the March 2025 Crime Statistics.

Chief Bill Westenberger presented the March 2025 crime statistics [See **Exhibit A**].

Motion by Councilmember Jones to accept the March 2025 crime statistics as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Viars.

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

**14. Information Technology**

## **15. Public Works and Building Maintenance**

### **A. Resolution: Offer for Abandoned Right-of-Way at 2995 and 2997 North Main Street**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution accepting the offer for the purchase of the right-of-way at 2995 and 2997 North Main Street.

[Councilmember Orochena recused herself from discussion and vote regarding Item 15. A].

Public Works Director Ricky Stewart presented a resolution accepting the offer for the purchase of the right of way at 2995 and 2997 North Main Street. The property owners' formal offer to purchase the abandoned right of way was \$5,000. There were two previous appraisals conducted for the right of way, the first being \$9,000 and the second being \$15,600. At the April 7, 2025, City Council meeting, the Council authorized the sale at \$12,300. Based on that authorization, Mr. Stewart's recommendation is denial of the offer of \$5,000.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to approve the Resolution accepting the offer of \$5,000 for the right of way at 2995 and 2997 North Main Street. Seconded Mayor Pro Tem Ferris.

Vote taken, motion denied 1-3-1 [Mayor Pro Tem Ferris, Councilmember Jones, and Councilmember Gutierrez opposed and Councilmember Orochena abstained]. Motion failed.

## **16. Recreation and Culture**

## **17. Community Development**

## **18. Public Comment/Business from the Floor**

6:49 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

ANDREW BRAMLETT [City Resident]: Mr. Bramlett presented a local history story regarding a wedding in front of the *General* [See **Exhibit B**].

6:50 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

## **19. City Manager's Report**

### **A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates**

Dr. Drobney did not have any updates for tonight.

## **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.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to ratify the appointments of Jennifer Gordy [Finance], Lieutenant Adam Hainline [Police], and Kamil McElwee [Southern Museum] to the Benefits Committee. Seconded by Councilmember Orochena.

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

## **21. Council Reports & Discussions**

Councilmember Jones thanked Chief Westenberger for the Taco Time event with the Kennesaw Police Department.

Councilmember Gutierrez had a fun weekend spending time with family. He has just finished up the last few tests for his EMT certification and will begin clinicals soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris said it is Georgia Cities Week and asked everyone to come out to see all the things that the City of Kennesaw has to offer.

Councilmember Orochena shared all the events the City of Kennesaw has coming up, including the Grand Prix, the annual plant sale at Smith-Gilbert Gardens, and an outdoor movie at Swift-Cantrell.

Councilmember Viars noted Smith-Gilbert Gardens won two grants from Cobb EMC and Cherokee Garden Club to support the butterfly house and living laboratory garden. Congratulations to Smith-Gilbert Gardens!

## **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.

Motion by Councilmember Gutierrez to enter into Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-3 for the purpose of discussing land and legal, motion seconded by Councilmember Viars.

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

6:55 PM Recess to Executive Session

Mayor, City Council, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Clerk, Economic Development Director, and City Attorney attended Executive Session.

7:37 PM Reconvene to Open Session

Councilmember Gutierrez read the Board back into Open Session and directed the Mayor and City Council to execute an affidavit in compliance with O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-4, motion seconded by Councilmember Jones.

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

**23. Adjourn**

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m. The next work session will be held on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lea Alvarez", is written over a horizontal line.

Lea Alvarez, City Clerk

# March 2025 Crime Statistics



| Group A Crimes               | Mar 2025   | Mar 2024  | YTD 2025   | YTD 2024   |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| AGGRAVATED ASSAULT           | 2 (+1)     | 1         | 11 (+4)    | 7          |
| INTIMIDATION                 | 14 (+9)    | 5         | 38 (+20)   | 18         |
| SIMPLE ASSAULT               | 16 (+3)    | 13        | 41 (-11)   | 52         |
| HOMICIDE OFFENSES            | 0 (-1)     | 1         | 0 (-1)     | 1          |
| SEX OFFENSES                 | 2 (+1)     | 1         | 7 (-2)     | 9          |
| KIDNAPPING                   | 0 (+0)     | 0         | 2 (+0)     | 2          |
| MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT          | 2 (-1)     | 3         | 8 (+3)     | 5          |
| BURGLARY                     | 1 (+0)     | 1         | 8 (+0)     | 8          |
| ANIMAL CRUELTY               | 0 (+0)     | 0         | 0 (+0)     | 0          |
| EMBEZZLEMENT                 | 0 (-1)     | 1         | 1 (-1)     | 2          |
| BRIBERY                      | 0 (+0)     | 0         | 0 (+0)     | 0          |
| ARSON                        | 0 (+0)     | 0         | 0 (+0)     | 0          |
| ROBBERY                      | 0 (+0)     | 0         | 2 (+2)     | 0          |
| FORGERY                      | 0 (-1)     | 1         | 3 (-3)     | 6          |
| EXTORTION                    | 0 (-1)     | 1         | 3 (-1)     | 4          |
| FRAUD OFFENSES               | 20 (+14)   | 6         | 50 (+13)   | 37         |
| LARCENY/ THEFT OFFENSES      | 15 (+6)    | 9         | 46 (+5)    | 41         |
| VANDALISM                    | 4 (-4)     | 8         | 13 (-6)    | 19         |
| STOLEN PROPERTY OFFENSES     | 0 (-2)     | 2         | 5 (+1)     | 4          |
| DRUG/ NARCOTICS OFFENSES     | 28 (+1)    | 27        | 86 (+5)    | 81         |
| PORNOGRAPHY OBSCENE MATERIAL | 0 (-2)     | 2         | 0 (-3)     | 3          |
| WEAPONS LAW VIOLATIONS       | 3 (-1)     | 4         | 13 (+3)    | 10         |
| <b>Totals</b>                | <b>107</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>337</b> | <b>309</b> |

|                              | Mar 2025 | Mar 2024 | YTD 2025 | YTD 2024 |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Auto Accidents               | 114 (-1) | 115      | 296 (-5) | 301      |
| Accident w/ Injury           | 6 (-4)   | 10       | 36 (+12) | 24       |
| Hit and Run                  | 13 (+0)  | 13       | 37 (+0)  | 37       |
| Hit and Run w/ Injury        | 0 (+0)   | 0        | 2 (-1)   | 3        |
| Person Hit by Auto w/ Injury | 0 (+0)   | 0        | 1 (+1)   | 0        |

|                              | Mar 2025    | Mar 2024 | YTD 2025     | YTD 2024 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Dispatched Calls for Service | 788 (+41)   | 747      | 2,173 (-13)  | 2,186    |
| Self-Initiated Activity      | 1,278 (-33) | 1,311    | 3,834 (+582) | 3,252    |
| Traffic Citations            | 520 (-110)  | 630      | 1,661 (-32)  | 1,693    |
| Traffic Warnings*            | 645 (-39)   | 684      | 2,098 (+450) | 1,648    |
| Arrests**                    | 78 (-7)     | 85       | 249 (-6)     | 255      |

\* Warnings do not include verbal warnings  
Arrests do not include juvenile arrests

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# KENNESAW HISTORY

## Wedding with the *General*

Last week was the anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase, that put our community on the map and made the locomotive *General* famous. Since that time, the famous engine has witnessed many historic events, from being on display at world's fairs to the Civil War Centennial. In 1972, it came back to Kennesaw permanently, and one local couple decided it would make the perfect backdrop for their wedding.

Glenn Skelton was a longtime Kennesaw resident and railroad employee, whose ancestors had worked for the railroad since before the Civil War. His grandfather, in fact, was a witness to the Great Locomotive Chase. When he and his fiancé, Mahala Williams, were discussing getting married, they realized the wedding could coincide with the *General's* return on April 12, 1972. Just three days later, they were married in front of the engine.

According to newspaper accounts, Skelton wore his conductor's uniform, while Williams wore a dress resembling those of the 1860s. It was a small wedding, with only their grown children from previous marriages in attendance. Unfortunately, I have not yet found a photo of the event.

## Wedding Set Before General

By SHARON BOSWELL  
Journal Staff Writer

When the General was stolen from Big Shanty by Yankee Raiders on April 12, 1862 surely James A. Skelton didn't realize what a big part it would play in his grandson's life 110 years later.

Skelton was working on the I&N Railroad and was one of the Southerners who made history that cloudy, rainy morning when the Rebel troops had to set out on the greatest railroad chase of all times.

On April 15, 1972 his grandson, Glenn Skelton of Kennesaw, will marry Mahala Williams of Powder Springs as they stand before the General and the Rev. Donald Voyles of Fair Oakes Baptist Church.

The two have permission from Kennesaw Mayor Louis Watts to have their wedding ceremonies in the Big Shanty Museum, home of the General, during the midst of the five-day commemoration of the locomotive's return to Georgia.

Mrs. Williams will be given in marriage by her son Bryard Poer who is a student at Kennesaw Junior College. She will wear a blue gingham dress of 1860 style with a matching bonnet.

Skelton, who is a conductor with the L&N Railroad on runs from Atlanta to Chattanooga, will wear his conductor's uniform complete with an heirloom watch like those worn in his grandfather's days. Skelton has been with the railroad for 31 years.

His father, Elijah Skelton also worked with the railroad.

The two, who met through a mutual friend, had originally planned to be married on April 21 at the Macland Baptist Church, "but we were just driving down the road when this occurred to us," Mrs. Williams said.

"We got to talking about the idea and it just sort of ballooned," she added.

The two will send no formal invitations to the wedding and plan only to have her three children and his two at the ceremony.

April 11, 1972 *Marietta Daily Journal*

Presented by Andrew J. Bramlett at the April 21, 2025,  
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**

**City Council Meeting  
4/21/2025  
Public Comment Sign-in**

|    | Name                 | Address              | Topic          |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Andrew J. Brantlett  | 2990 Somerfield Ct.  | Local history  |
| 2  | DEAN KLEIN           | 2995 N. MAIN         | ROW offer      |
| 3  | Timothy H 313        | 2059 White Oak Creek | Public Comment |
| 4  | Sebastian R. Ruckert |                      |                |
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