

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

**Livestream: www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/
May 5, 2025
6:30 PM**

Present	Mayor Derek Easterling Mayor Pro Tem Pat Ferris Councilmember Madelyn Orochena Councilmember Tracey Viars Councilmember Antonio Jones Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez City Clerk Lea Alvarez City Manager Jeff Drobney Assistant City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr.
---------	---

1. Invocation

Mayor Easterling 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

5. Presentations

6. Public Comment (Items on the Agenda)

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

9. Committee and Board Reports

10. Public Hearing(s)

11. Consent Agenda

- A. **Minutes: April 14, 2025 Work Session**
Approval of the April 14, 2025, City Council work session minutes.
- B. **Minutes: April 14, 2025 Executive Session**
Approval of the April 14, 2025, City Council executive session minutes.
- C. **Minutes: April 21, 2025 Regular Meeting**
Approval of the April 21, 2025, City Council regular meeting minutes.
- D. **Minutes: April 21, 2025 Executive Session**
Approval of the April 21, 2025, City Council executive session minutes.
- E. **Resolution: Intergovernmental Agreement for Fire Prevention District**
Consideration for approval of a Resolution authorizing the execution of an intergovernmental agreement with Cobb County for a fire prevention service district.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-31

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

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

12. General and Administrative

- A. **Certification of Estimated Rollback Rate for 2025 Notice of Assessment**
Certification of the estimated rollback rate for 2025 Notice of Assessment in compliance with HB 581 and HB 92.

Finance Director Jennifer Gordy stated that the estimated rollback rate is a new concept that became law in 2025. It was created by House Bill 581 (November 2024) and revised by House Bill 92 (April 2025). House Bill 581 created the estimated rollback rate designed to provide local governments with more flexibility in accurately previewing that year's millage rate to the property owner on their Notice of Assessment. House Bill 92 added a deadline by which the estimated rollback rate must be provided and added a fallback provision if a jurisdiction fails to certify and provide an estimated rollback rate. ACCG and GMA guidance recommend conservative estimates, considering budget discussions have not occurred, and 2025 digest numbers have not been provided. Ms. Gordy reminded everyone that adoption of the millage rate will occur on August 4, 2025.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to certify the current adopted M&O millage rate of 7.75 to provide our taxpayers with the most accurate Notice of Assessment. Seconded by Councilmember Jones.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris reminded everyone that this was just an estimate and that the City would still have three public hearings regarding the millage rate. He would like the Council to look at an additional rollback as we get closer to setting the rate.

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

B. Audit Report: Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2024

Consideration to accept the Audit Report for Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2024, for the City of Kennesaw as presented by Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC.

Will Derzis from Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC presented the audit report for Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2024, for the City of Kennesaw. The City was issued a clean, unmodified audit report. The respective financial statements are considered to present fairly the financial position and results of operations as of and for the year ended September 30, 2024.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to accept the Audit Report for Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2024, for the City of Kennesaw, as presented. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferris.

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

13. Public Safety

14. Information Technology

15. Public Works and Building Maintenance

16. Recreation and Culture

17. Community Development

18. Public Comment (General)

6:46 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

ANDREW BRAMLETT (City Resident): Mr. Bramlett presented local history regarding King's Wigwam, which was located on Cherokee Street [See **Exhibit A**].

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

19. City Manager's Report

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

Dr. Drobney had nothing to report 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 Luke Howe, Lea Alvarez,

Jeff Drobney, Bill McNair, Brian Acker, Ricky Stewart, Nikki McGraw, Joshua Gurrero, and Dave Simpson to the Benefits Committee with terms ending December 2027.
Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

Mayor Easterling shared that Randall Bentley, Sr. is going to step aside as City Attorney to spend more time with his family. Sam Hensley, Jr. with Bentley, Bentley, and Bentley will step in to take his place.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to appoint Sam Hensley, Jr. as the City Attorney.
Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferris.

Vote taken, motion approved 4-1 [Councilmember Orochena opposed]. Motion passed.

21. Council Reports & Discussions

Councilmember Gutierrez shared his clinicals went very well. He learned a lot! He has two more clinicals this week and then, after that, he will take his state certification test.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris shared today is Cinco De Mayor and this weekend is Mother's Day. He hoped all mothers out there have a pleasant and blessed weekend.

Councilmember Orochena thanked Andrew Bramlett for his presentation and looked forward to reading his paper.

Councilmember Jones did not have anything to add tonight.

Councilmember Viars thanked everyone involved in the decision to postpone the concert this past Saturday due to the rain. She knows how difficult a decision it is to make.

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 legal, motion seconded by Councilmember Viars.

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

6:52 p.m. Recess to Executive Session

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

7:06 p.m. 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.

Motion by Councilmember Jones to add an item to the agenda regarding the continuation of Special Counsel Representation in Service Delivery Strategy negotiations with Cobb County and the City of Mableton. Seconded by Councilmember Orochena

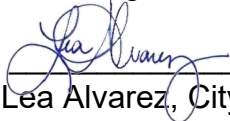
Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 5-0. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilmember Viars to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter confirming Smith, Welch, Webb & White's continued representation in Service Delivery Strategy negotiations with Cobb County and the City of Mableton. Seconded by Councilmember Jones.

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

23. Adjourn

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m. The next work session will be held on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.



Lea Alvarez, City Clerk

KENNESAW HISTORY

King's Wigwam

From 1915 to 1919, Kennesaw was home to one of the few summer resorts for African Americans open in Georgia during the Jim Crow era. Located on Cherokee Street, it was built by Cornelius King, a businessman from Atlanta's Auburn Avenue. King had purchased the land several years before from Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, a well respected religious leader from Atlanta.

The resort had a lake, swimming pool, cabins, golf links, baseball field, and more. It was only open during the summer, and it attracted many of the most notable names in Black Atlanta at that time. Newspaper accounts from the *Atlanta Independent* describe it as an idyllic retreat in the country. The Wigwam also attracted Cobb County visitors, including local congregations that used the lake for baptisms.

Sadly, in 1919, a guest was falsely accused of attacking a woman in Cherokee County, and was nearly lynched in Marietta. After this, the resort closed, and the resort's amenities seemingly vanished. The land is now the Tara neighborhood. All that is known to survive is a steel cut-out of a Native American chief now perched on a building in Atlanta.

A paper I presented about the resort at an undergraduate conference last week at Mississippi State can be found at this QR code.



Baptism at the Wigwam, c. 1918.
From Patrice Shelton Lassiter

Presented by Andrew J. Bramlett at the May 5, 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
5/5/2025
Public Comment Sign-in**

	Name	Address	Topic
1	Andrew J. Brunett	2990 Sonnet Blvd. Ct.	Local history
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
19			