

Mayor

Derek Easterling

City Manager

Jeff Drobney, ICMA-CM

City Clerk

Lea Alvarez, CMC

**Council**

Madelyn Orochena

Tracey Viars

Jonathon Bothers

Antonio Jones

Anthony Gutierrez-Leon

City Council**First Millage Rate Hearing Agenda**

July 27, 2026 6:00 PM

Council Chambers

(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)

Livestream: www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/

1. **Invocation**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Call to Order**
4. **Announcements**
5. **Presentations**
6. **Public Comment**

This section is for comment on any item on the agenda.
7. **Old Business**
8. **New Business**
9. **Committee and Board Reports**
10. **Public Hearing(s)**
 - A. **First Public Hearing: Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate**

Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate.
 - B. **First Public Hearing: Bond Millage Rate**

Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Bond Millage Rate.
11. **Consent Agenda**
12. **General and Administrative**
13. **Public Safety**

14. Information Technology

15. Public Works and Building Maintenance

16. Recreation and Culture

17. Community Development

18. Public Comment

This section is for general comment.

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

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



Item Report

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Gordy, Finance Director

DATE: July 27, 2026

TITLE: **First Public Hearing: Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate**
Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate.

Summary:

First Public Hearing on the proposed RESOLUTION to adopt the Maintenance and Operation (M&O) Millage Rate. 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 and the Current 2026 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy were properly advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on July 18, 2026, whereas the other advertisements were published on both July 18 and 25, 2026 in accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32. The second and third public hearings will take place on August 3, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., respectively.

Recommendation:

Fiscal Impact:

Attachments:

1. RES 2026 - M&O Millage Rate Adoption
2. Advertisement of current & 5 year history and adoption date-Kennesaw Tax Year 2026 FY 27
3. Notice of Property Tax Increase Ad Tax Year 2026 FY27
4. Additional Ad 2026 FY2027
5. Press Release Notice of Property Tax Increase TY 2026 FY27
6. 2026-07-18 3 MDJ Millage Rate Display Ads
7. 2026-07-25 2 MDJ Millage Rate Display Ads

**CITY OF KENNESAW
GEORGIA**

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-, 2026

**RESOLUTION OF THE KENNESAW CITY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH
A MAINTENANCE & OPERATION (M&O) MILLAGE RATE
FOR THE CITY OF KENNESAW FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENNESAW,
COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:**

WHEREAS, the City of Kennesaw, Georgia desires to establish its ad valorem tax millage rate for the fiscal year 2026-2027; and

WHEREAS, the governing authority has advertised its intent to establish said millage rate by placing an advertisement conforming to O.C.G.A. §48-5-32(c) in a newspaper of general circulation of Cobb County serving the residents of the City of Kennesaw, said advertisement appearing two (2) weeks prior to the hearing at which said millage rate is to be considered; and

WHEREAS, the public hearings required by O.C.G.A. §48-5-32(c) were duly held on July 27, 2026 and August 3, 2026 prior to the adoption of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the final millage rate has been calculated by the governing authority to be 7.75 mills for Maintenance & Operation (M&O) and the final millage rate for the Bond will be adopted by separate resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kennesaw City Council does hereby establish the M&O millage rate for the City of Kennesaw, Georgia, ad valorem property tax, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at 7.75 mills.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Kennesaw City Council on this ___ day of August, 2026.

ATTEST:

CITY OF KENNESAW

Nicholas Simpson, Deputy City Clerk

Derek Easterling, Mayor

NOTICE

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Kennesaw does hereby announce that the tax millage rate for Fiscal Year 2026 will be set at a meeting of the Mayor and Council held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA on August 3, 2026 at 6:30 PM. Pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32, the City of Kennesaw does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2026 TAX DIGEST AND FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Real, Personal & Utility	1,740,178,425	2,018,309,824	2,293,915,007	2,497,672,724	2,666,756,393	2,768,339,588
Motor Vehicle	8,208,810	7,068,760	6,794,230	5,839,070	5,170,940	4,538,580
Mobile Homes	1,592,910	1,620,674	1,613,365	1,566,354	1,575,073	1,527,859
Timber - 100%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heavy Duty Equipment	7,873	87,115	36,503	32,339	34,181	26,013
Gross Tax Digest	1,749,988,018	2,027,086,373	2,302,359,105	2,505,110,487	2,673,536,587	2,774,432,040
Less M&O Exemptions	321,498,717	466,305,125	537,172,801	609,207,363	618,024,011	625,033,905
Net M&O Digest	1,428,489,301	1,560,781,248	1,765,186,304	1,895,903,124	2,055,512,576	2,149,398,135
Gross M&O Millage Rate	8.00	8.00	8.00	7.75	7.75	7.75
Less Millage Rate Rollbacks	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net M&O Millage Rate	8.00	8.00	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75
Net M&O Taxes Levied	11,427,914	12,486,250	13,680,194	14,693,249	15,930,222	16,657,836
Gross Tax Digest	1,749,988,018	2,027,086,373	2,302,359,105	2,505,110,487	2,673,536,587	2,774,432,040
Less Bond Exemptions	192,887,844	251,473,580	265,480,930	289,439,587	300,736,582	305,885,249
Net Bond Digest	1,557,100,174	1,775,612,793	2,036,878,175	2,215,670,900	2,372,800,005	2,468,546,791
Gross Bond Millage Rate	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.40
Less Millage Rate Rollbacks	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00
Net Bond Millage Rate	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.40	1.40
Net Bond Taxes Levied	2,335,650	2,663,419	3,055,317	3,323,506	3,321,920	3,455,966
Net M&O Taxes \$ Increase	995,105	1,058,336	1,193,944	1,013,055	1,236,973	727,613
Net M&O Taxes % Increase	9.5%	9.3%	9.6%	7.4%	8.4%	4.6%
Net Bond Taxes \$ Increase	222,037	327,769	391,898	268,189	-1,586	134,046
Net Bond Taxes % Increase	10.5%	14.0%	14.7%	8.8%	0.0%	4.0%

All concerned citizens are invited to public hearings held at the Kennesaw City Hall Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw GA on the dates and times below:

Monday, July 27, 2026 6:00 PM (Special Called Meeting)

Monday, August 3, 2026 10:30 AM (Special Called Meeting) and 6:30 PM (Final Adoption)

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this increase are at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 7.75 mills for M&O and 1.40 mills for Bond, an increase of 0.316 mills for M&O and 0.050 mills for Bond. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.434 mills for M&O and 1.350 mills for Bond. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$400,000 is approximately \$51 increase for M&O and \$8 increase for Bond and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$750,000 is approximately \$95 increase for M&O and \$15 increase for Bond.

**IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
NOTICE TO KENNESAW TAXPAYERS
CITY NOT INCREASING TAX RATES**

According to Georgia law, all taxing agencies must advertise a tax increase and hold three public hearings to claim taxes on reassessed properties even if the millage rate remains unchanged as is the case in Kennesaw. The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate equal to last year's millage of 9.15 mills.

PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw today announces its intention to increase the 2026 property taxes it will levy this year by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond over the rollback millage rate.

Each year, the board of tax assessors is required to review the assessed value for property tax purposes of taxable property in the county. When the trend of prices on properties that have recently sold in the county indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the board tax assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred.

The budget tentatively adopted by the City of Kennesaw Council requires a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate; therefore, before the City of Kennesaw Council may finalize the tentative budget and set a final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the City of Kennesaw Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on July 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM and August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

BUDGET

From A1

informal conversations with colleagues, staff or other officials to discuss proposals, answer questions and build understanding or support before a matter is brought up formally. Under Georgia's Open Meetings Act, a meeting of three or more of the board members would be considered a quorum and require public access. Walking the halls allows commissioners to have informal conversations outside of executive session and public meetings.

Brantley said the position had been included in his department's original budget request months ago but was omitted from the initial proposal. He said County Manager Dr. Jackie McMorris recently contacted him after funding became available to ask whether he still wanted the position.

Brantley added the deputy director would serve under him, handling more of the "day-to-day operations" so that he could begin looking at "the strategic long-term goals."

Commission Chair Lisa Cupid explained she restored the request after reviewing department's original submissions.

"Our parks department is the largest department behind public safety," Cupid said. "They generally operate almost seven days a week ... I think having a deputy director to be able to support him as he's leading that department is not unreasonable given the size of the department, given the weight of the work."

Tesar shared the position was added to the budget by scaling back other proposed expenditures, including reducing Superior Court staffing requests from seven to six full-time calendar coordinator positions — a roughly \$95,000 decrease — and lowering the county's local match for a proposed on-demand transit grant from \$500,000 to \$330,268.

Sheffield said the issue wasn't whether the position had originally been requested but whether commissioners had adequate opportunity to discuss it with the department head, not just finance director, before it appeared in the revised proposal.

"It gives us an opportunity, as we all know, to ask additional questions," Sheffield said. "Questions that I could have asked in advance of this hearing."

Cupid acknowledged that some department heads were more active than others in advocating for their requests and said that created inconsistencies in how needs were presented to commissioners.

Some staff, she noted, thought they were "being respectful" by just submitting the memo and not reaching out to commissioners.

According to an April presentation, 322 new full-time positions — 275 within the general fund — were originally requested by staff.

"What I've learned is that the variation in communication of our leadership across the county is resulting in some having their interests and their needs reflected in the budget when others have needs, but just approach this differently," Cupid said.

She believed the county should create a more consistent process next year to ensure departments have more opportunities to directly present their priorities.

COMMISSIONERS' FRUSTRATIONS

Sheffield and Commissioners Kell Gambrell and JoAnn Birrell all confirmed Tesar had met with them individually to go over the revised proposal Monday.

Birrell thanked Tesar for setting up appointments and walking the halls with commissioners.

"Initially, when the budget was first shared with the board, we were asked for our priorities and listed all

of those. The departments had submitted all their requests, but a lot of them ... didn't make the cut. So now things are being reconsidered I guess," Birrell said.

"And Buddy is walking halls, we're not hearing from each other or who's presenting," Birrell later told the Journal she believed the board "needed to have a clear proposal" before the first public hearing, expressing a desire for more communication, including between board members and the chairwoman.

Birrell acknowledged that, after accounting for rising operating costs and previously approved expenditures, there was limited funding available to accommodate additional requests. She said she was unable to secure support for her own priority of funding staffing for Precinct 6, while recognizing that several of the positions added to the proposal had been requested repeatedly by departments and addressed longstanding needs. Even so, she said the county should prioritize looking for ways to conserve money where possible.

Meanwhile, Gambrell said the repeated budget revisions left both commissioners and finance staff struggling to keep up.

"I share your frustration," Gambrell told Sheffield, explaining she met with Tesar once in the morning Monday and again around 1:30 p.m. "And by 3 p.m. (the budget) had changed. In his efforts to present a budget to us, it changed three times, which is not only unfair to him and staff, but is also unfair to us as a board."

She said the board lacks a

transparent process for collectively deciding which requests should receive priority.

"Yes, we have a binder book full of positions, but we never sit as a board to discuss the priorities," Gambrell said. "We leave it up to Buddy to have to walk the halls, keeping a spreadsheet of where each of us stands instead of having this open conversation dialogue here today."

She later told the Journal, "If this is truly the chair's budget, then the chair should be having the conversations with the Board of Commissioners not the finance director."

Gambrell also questioned increasing commissioners' office budgets while some departmental requests — including for overtime and other deputy positions — remain unfunded, and expressed frustration that the board has yet to address "the overspending that is happening by some departments," specifically pointing to the sheriff's office.

Cupid defended the budgeting process during the meeting, saying it has become more transparent in recent years with department requests and supporting documents now publicly available.

She acknowledged that demand always exceeds available funding.

"It is our desire to make sure that this is an open process, and unfortunately, the needs always outweigh the resources that we do have. It is a difficult thing, but it is a great thing when we are able to at least do our best to meet people where their



Commissioners Kell Gambrell, above left, and Monique Sheffield, above right, speak during the Cobb Board of Commissioners meeting Tuesday.

interests and where their needs are," Cupid said, adding she hoped to work with agencies whose requests were not fulfilled throughout the year in addition to during next year's budget process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Residents also offered their opinions on the budget during the county's first of three public hearings.

Andy Kingery, with the Cobb County GOP Election Integrity Committee, asked commissioners to consider adding a deputy director position for the Cobb Board of Elections and Registration, stating Cobb is the only large Georgia county without one.

Christine Rozman urged commissioners to curb spending growth.

"I think there's a common theme here: quit spending so much money," she said.

Another east Cobb resident criticized the county's proposed expansion of microtransit service, calling it "financially irresponsible" and arguing countywide tax dollars should instead support services that benefit all

residents, such as public safety, parks and roads.

Lily Trotter, a 20-year-old political affairs intern with The Borgen Project, spoke later during general public comment, encouraging commissioners to improve communication with residents and explain major budget decisions in simpler terms.

The Borgen Project is a nonprofit focused on making global poverty a primary focus of U.S. foreign policy.

"I understand that all of you are very busy, I can't imagine what it is like being a government official... but I think just coming together and realizing we're all on the same team is very helpful," she said. "Sometimes it feels like it's an 'us versus them.'"

Commissioners are expected to hold a second public hearing on the proposed budget next week during a special-called meeting at 6:30 p.m. July 21. A third and final hearing, followed by consideration of the budget's adoption, is scheduled during the board's regular meeting on July 28.

Cupid is also scheduled to host two public town hall meetings which will include updates on the proposed budget at 7 p.m. July 22 at East Cobb Library and July 23 at Milford Recreation Center.

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FULLER

From A1

we knew, that was a part of the fabric of this state for so long, that Democratic Party is dead,” Fuller said. “It’s being taken over by communists.”

While Fuller often used the terms “communist” and “socialist” interchangeably to describe Kiroas as well as other Democratic politicians such as New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, socialism and communism differ in key ways, and those that identify themselves as democratic socialists may not necessarily be communists.

The rise of candidates identifying themselves with democratic socialism, however, has alarmed lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle, including more moderate Democrats in the House and Senate.

Fuller said the ideological shift taking place within the Democratic Party makes it even more paramount that Republicans turn out for the November midterm elections.

“We have to re-energize ourselves. We have to redouble our efforts because we’re at a time that either we’re going to be the free republic that we’ve always been for 250 years, and that we fought for, or we’re gonna be communists,” Fuller said. “That’s the choice.”

Following his remarks, Fuller also emphasized the importance of passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or SAVE, Act.



Lucinda Warrike

Attendees listen during the Cobb County Republican Women’s meeting on Friday.



U.S. Rep. Clay Fuller, R-Lookout Mountain, speaks Friday during a Cobb County Republican Women’s Club meeting.

The act would require proof of U.S. citizenship, like a birth certificate or passport, to register to vote in federal elections.

The act has faced headwinds as it made its way through Congress, with the bill stalling in the Senate as Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, refused to bring it to the floor for a vote, arguing the act doesn’t have the required 60 votes to pass.

Fuller said the SAVE Act is vital to protecting Ameri-

can elections.

“I think election integrity is the No. 1 issue in our country,” Fuller told the Marietta Daily Journal. “I think when you talk about American elections, only Americans should be voting in, in American elections.”

Critics of the bill say it hammers home unfounded claims by President Donald Trump about fraud in elections, and media reports and fact check-

ers have said there’s no evidence for rampant voting by

non-citizens.

Those opposed to the bill have also alleged that it would prevent certain people from voting by adding unnecessary requirements.

Fuller dismissed the concerns, and said those saying it would make it unnecessarily hard to register to vote are just trying to frighten voters.

“If you want to vote, you’re going to be able to vote. The SAVE Act isn’t going to impact that at all,” Fuller said. “The criticism is there to scare people because (Democrats) want to cheat.”

Attendees were receptive to Fuller’s points, with applause filling the room following his remarks.

Beth Childress, a member of Cobb County Republican Women’s Club who attended Friday’s meeting, said she was excited to hear Fuller speak.

“I thought he was awesome,” Childress said. “I liked the emphasis on communism, that we’re turning to communism and we need to turn away.”

MILLAGE

From A1

Chief Financial Officer David Baker said the district maintained an 18.9-mill rate from 2007 until the 2023 reduction. He also noted the district eliminated its 0.9-mill debt service rate in 2007, paying off its long-term debt.

“The Cobb County School District has a history of keeping property taxes low and Cobb residents enjoy one of the lowest property tax structures in the metro Atlanta area,” Baker said.

According to Baker, the district’s final tax digest increased by 4.03% this year, closely matching the 4.08% increase projected when the board adopted its \$1.88 billion fiscal year 2027 budget in May.

The projected 4.08% growth in the property tax digest was expected to bring an additional \$29.3 million in local tax revenue to the Cobb County School District, according to the approved budget.

Baker shared that residential property, which accounts for about 71% of the district’s tax digest, increased in value by 4.18% this year. Commercial property, representing about 21% of the digest, increased by 7.05%, while personal property, utilities, motor vehicles and other categories — making up the remaining 8% — grew by 4.6%.

He added that the average estimated value of a Cobb County homestead property was just over \$510,000.

Though the tax rate is proposed to remain the same, a rise in property values would mean the owner of a home valued at \$500,000 would see roughly \$129.96 in additional taxes, according to the district. The proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$700,000 is approximately \$191.52.

Under Georgia law, rising property value assessments not accompanied by a corresponding millage rate “rollback” that offsets the increase in tax due are considered tax increases and must be advertised as such.

To collect the same revenue as last year and avoid an increase in taxes of 3.8%, the millage rate would have had to be decreased to 18.016 mills.

Board member Becky Say-

ler noted the fiscal year 2027 budget, which took effect July 1, was built assuming the 18.7-mill rate would remain in place.

“So if we don’t adopt this millage rate there would be negative consequences for salaries, which is 94% of the budget,” she said Thursday night.

Baker also highlighted the district’s property tax exemptions, which totaled an equivalent value of \$298.5 million this year, a 7.07% increase from last year. Nearly \$256 million of those exemptions came from the county’s exemption for homeowners age 62 and older.

Sayler questioned Baker about the nearly \$300 million in exemptions and how recently approved state property tax reform could affect future budgets.

Baker said district officials have begun reviewing the legislation and planned to take “a closer look” prior to the start of the legislative session.

Sayler asked the board receive additional guidance before next year’s budget process because the new law could affect future property tax revenues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Because the adopted millage rate exceeded the state-calculated rollback rate, Georgia law required the board to hold three public hearings before the final vote. Two hearings were held July 9, while the final hearing took place Thursday evening before the night meeting. One person spoke during the second hearing, and no one spoke during the first or final hearing.

While much of Thursday’s public comment was dominated by discussion of Trump’s appearance at Wheeler High School Wednesday, Heather Tolley-Bauer, co-founder of Watching the Funds Cobb, did question the district’s financial priorities, referencing the millage rate.

Tolley-Bauer noted the district’s budget has grown from roughly \$900 million in 2015 to \$1.88 billion and pointed out rising property values would still amount to a property tax increase despite the unchanged millage rate.

“(The budget is) more than double. And you still had to balance this budget by leaving 185 positions un-

filled and using reserves,” she said. “The millage rate sits at 18.7 mills. Flat, but it’s a 3.8% tax increase on tax-paying homeowners. And Superintendent (Chris) Ragsdale told us: this board will never lower the rate. So we’re going to keep paying more in taxes.”

She further criticized district leaders for not using Wednesday’s event to highlight Cobb Schools’ accomplishments or advocate for district funding, arguing instead the event became partisan after Republican elected officials and candidates addressed the crowd while local Democratic officials were not invited.

“Once again, you’ve proven who you really serve,” she said. “Since you didn’t showcase our district, didn’t include a single state or county Democratic leader and didn’t advocate for our kids, yet you’re increasing our taxes, here’s my question: how can we trust you to serve our kids and be responsible with our tax dollars when you clearly don’t like most of your families?”

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the

DATELINE ■ COBB

Whiskers on Wheels: Family skate night benefits cat rescue

Staff reports

On Aug. 10, Pounce de Leon Cat Rescue will host “Whiskers on Wheels,” a roller-skating benefit for homeless cats at Sparkles Family Fun Center of Smyrna, 666 Smyrna Hill Drive in Smyrna.

The event will feature music with a live DJ, silent auction, raffles and games. Festivities begin after school, running from 3:30 until 9 p.m. All ages are welcome. Wearing cat ears is encouraged. Admission is \$5 and includes skate rental.

Railroad Rendezvous

The popular Railroad Rendezvous will be 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 25 at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, 2829 Cherokee Street NW in Kennesaw.

Activities will include celebrating the railroad and all things transportation throughout the day. Visitors can experience the rare opportunity to step aboard The General locomotive and tour the cab of this historic steam locomotive. Visitors can also step inside the renovated Southern Railway Caboose X372 to experience what life was like for railroad crews during the golden age of rail travel.

For more information, visit southernmuseum.org.

Smith-Gilbert Gardens Special Deals Day

The Smith-Gilbert Gardens, 2382 Pine Mountain Road in Kennesaw, will on July 25 have a day of promotions for the whole family including:

♦ Garden with Wings admission included with general admission children tickets.

♦ Gardens branded water bottles for the first 25 visitors.

♦ Dog bandanas for Dog Day visitors, while supplies last.

For more information, visit smithgilbertgardens.com.

Powder Springs Community Taskforce’s 25th Annual Back 2 School Bash

The Powder Springs Community Taskforce in partnership with Isaac Okoro will present its 25th Annual Back 2 School Bash from 1 to 5 p.m. on July 26 at the Ron Anderson Recreation Center, 3820 Macedonia Road in Powder Springs.

Register one’s child to receive a backpack at <https://tinyurl.com/368bef7j>.

board approved a \$1.32 million contract with Toccoa-based Bowen & Watson to replace the softball field house for Campbell High School.

Thursday’s approval allows the project, funded by the Education Special Local Option Sales Tax (Ed-SPOST V), to remain on schedule with a substantial completion date of April 2027.

The new building will include locker rooms, public restrooms, utilities and offices, storage and additional restrooms for coaches. On social media Friday, Sayler said the project was “an exciting and necessary upgrade.”

The board also approved a \$15.13 million contract with Bremen-based R.K.

Redding Construction for an annex replacement, in accordance with the Ed-SPOST VI program, at Kincaid Elementary School. The project — expected to be completed by July 2028 — will include a new addition, secure vestibule, modernized restrooms, parking and site improvements and facility repainting.



IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
NOTICE TO KENNESAW TAXPAYERS
CITY NOT INCREASING TAX RATES

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NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this increase are at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 7.75 mills for M&O and 1.40 mills for Bond, an increase of 0.316 mills for M&O and 0.050 mills for Bond. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.434 mills for M&O and 1.350 mills for Bond. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$400,000 is approximately \$51 increase for M&O and \$8 increase for Bond and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$750,000 is approximately \$95 increase for M&O and \$15 increase for Bond.



Item Report

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Gordy, Finance Director

DATE: July 27, 2026

TITLE: **First Public Hearing: Bond Millage Rate**
Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Bond Millage Rate.

Summary:

First Public Hearing on the proposed RESOLUTION to adopt the Bond Millage Rate. The City of Kennesaw is proposing a millage rate of 1.4 for the Bond, 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 September 21, 2004. The dates of the public hearings and the Current 2026 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy were properly advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on July 18, 2026, whereas the other advertisements were published on both July 18 and 25, 2026 in accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32. The second and third public hearings will take place on August 3, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., respectively.

Recommendation:

Fiscal Impact:

Attachments:

1. RES 2026- Bond Millage Rate Adoption
2. Advertisement of current & 5 year history and adoption date-Kennesaw Tax Year 2026 FY 27
3. Notice of Property Tax Increase Ad Tax Year 2026 FY27
4. Additional Ad 2026 FY2027
5. Press Release Notice of Property Tax Increase TY 2026 FY27
6. 2026-07-18 3 MDJ Millage Rate Display Ads
7. 2026-07-25 2 MDJ Millage Rate Display Ads

**CITY OF KENNESAW
GEORGIA**

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-, 2026

**RESOLUTION OF THE KENNESAW CITY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH
THE BOND MILLAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF KENNESAW FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENNESAW,
COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:**

WHEREAS, the City of Kennesaw, Georgia desires to establish its ad valorem tax millage rate for the fiscal year 2026-2027; and

WHEREAS, the governing authority has advertised its intent to establish said millage rate by placing an advertisement conforming to O.C.G.A. §48-5-32(c) in a newspaper of general circulation of Cobb County serving the residents of the City of Kennesaw, said advertisement appearing two (2) weeks prior to the hearing at which said millage rate is to be considered; and

WHEREAS, the public hearings required by O.C.G.A. §48-5-32(c) were duly held on July 27, 2026 and August 3, 2026 prior to the adoption of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Bond millage rate has been calculated by the governing authority to be 1.4 mills and the final millage rate for Maintenance & Operation (M&O) will be adopted by separate resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kennesaw City Council does hereby establish the bond millage rate for the City of Kennesaw, Georgia, ad valorem property tax, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at 1.4 mills.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Kennesaw City Council on this __ day of August, 2026.

ATTEST:

CITY OF KENNESAW

Nicholas Simpson, Deputy City Clerk

Derek Easterling, Mayor

NOTICE

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Kennesaw does hereby announce that the tax millage rate for Fiscal Year 2026 will be set at a meeting of the Mayor and Council held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA on August 3, 2026 at 6:30 PM. Pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32, the City of Kennesaw does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2026 TAX DIGEST AND FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Real, Personal & Utility	1,740,178,425	2,018,309,824	2,293,915,007	2,497,672,724	2,666,756,393	2,768,339,588
Motor Vehicle	8,208,810	7,068,760	6,794,230	5,839,070	5,170,940	4,538,580
Mobile Homes	1,592,910	1,620,674	1,613,365	1,566,354	1,575,073	1,527,859
Timber - 100%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heavy Duty Equipment	7,873	87,115	36,503	32,339	34,181	26,013
Gross Tax Digest	1,749,988,018	2,027,086,373	2,302,359,105	2,505,110,487	2,673,536,587	2,774,432,040
Less M&O Exemptions	321,498,717	466,305,125	537,172,801	609,207,363	618,024,011	625,033,905
Net M&O Digest	1,428,489,301	1,560,781,248	1,765,186,304	1,895,903,124	2,055,512,576	2,149,398,135
Gross M&O Millage Rate	8.00	8.00	8.00	7.75	7.75	7.75
Less Millage Rate Rollbacks	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net M&O Millage Rate	8.00	8.00	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75
Net M&O Taxes Levied	11,427,914	12,486,250	13,680,194	14,693,249	15,930,222	16,657,836
Gross Tax Digest	1,749,988,018	2,027,086,373	2,302,359,105	2,505,110,487	2,673,536,587	2,774,432,040
Less Bond Exemptions	192,887,844	251,473,580	265,480,930	289,439,587	300,736,582	305,885,249
Net Bond Digest	1,557,100,174	1,775,612,793	2,036,878,175	2,215,670,900	2,372,800,005	2,468,546,791
Gross Bond Millage Rate	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.40
Less Millage Rate Rollbacks	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00
Net Bond Millage Rate	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.40	1.40
Net Bond Taxes Levied	2,335,650	2,663,419	3,055,317	3,323,506	3,321,920	3,455,966
Net M&O Taxes \$ Increase	995,105	1,058,336	1,193,944	1,013,055	1,236,973	727,613
Net M&O Taxes % Increase	9.5%	9.3%	9.6%	7.4%	8.4%	4.6%
Net Bond Taxes \$ Increase	222,037	327,769	391,898	268,189	-1,586	134,046
Net Bond Taxes % Increase	10.5%	14.0%	14.7%	8.8%	0.0%	4.0%

All concerned citizens are invited to public hearings held at the Kennesaw City Hall Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw GA on the dates and times below:

Monday, July 27, 2026 6:00 PM (Special Called Meeting)

Monday, August 3, 2026 10:30 AM (Special Called Meeting) and 6:30 PM (Final Adoption)

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this increase are at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 7.75 mills for M&O and 1.40 mills for Bond, an increase of 0.316 mills for M&O and 0.050 mills for Bond. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.434 mills for M&O and 1.350 mills for Bond. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$400,000 is approximately \$51 increase for M&O and \$8 increase for Bond and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$750,000 is approximately \$95 increase for M&O and \$15 increase for Bond.

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PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw today announces its intention to increase the 2026 property taxes it will levy this year by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond over the rollback millage rate.

Each year, the board of tax assessors is required to review the assessed value for property tax purposes of taxable property in the county. When the trend of prices on properties that have recently sold in the county indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the board tax assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred.

The budget tentatively adopted by the City of Kennesaw Council requires a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate; therefore, before the City of Kennesaw Council may finalize the tentative budget and set a final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the City of Kennesaw Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on July 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM and August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

BUDGET

From A1

informal conversations with colleagues, staff or other officials to discuss proposals, answer questions and build understanding or support before a matter is brought up formally. Under Georgia's Open Meetings Act, a meeting of three or more of the board members would be considered a quorum and require public access. Walking the halls allows commissioners to have informal conversations outside of executive session and public meetings.

Brantley said the position had been included in his department's original budget request months ago but was omitted from the initial proposal. He said County Manager Dr. Jackie McMorris recently contacted him after funding became available to ask whether he still wanted the position.

Brantley added the deputy director would serve under him, handling more of the "day-to-day operations" so that he could begin looking at "the strategic long-term goals."

Commission Chair Lisa Cupid explained she restored the request after reviewing the department's original submissions. "Our parks department is the largest department behind public safety," Cupid said. "They generally operate almost seven days a week ... I think having a deputy director to be able to support him as he's leading that department is not unreasonable given the size of the department, given the weight of the work."

Tesar shared the position was added to the budget by scaling back other proposed expenditures, including reducing Superior Court staffing requests from seven to six full-time calendar coordinator positions — a roughly \$95,000 decrease — and lowering the county's local match for a proposed on-demand transit grant from \$500,000 to \$330,268.

Sheffield said the issue wasn't whether the position had originally been requested but whether commissioners had adequate opportunity to discuss it with the department head, not just finance director, before it appeared in the revised proposal.

"It gives us an opportunity, as we all know, to ask additional questions," Sheffield said. "Questions that I could have asked in advance of this hearing."

Cupid acknowledged that some department heads were more active than others in advocating for their requests and said that created inconsistencies in how needs were presented to commissioners. Some staff, she noted, thought they were "being respectful" by just submitting the memo and not reaching out to commissioners.

According to an April presentation, 322 new full-time positions — 275 within the general fund — were originally requested by staff.

"What I've learned is that the variation in our leadership across the county is resulting in some having their interests and their needs reflected in the budget when others have needs, but just approach this differently," Cupid said.

She believed the county should create a more consistent process next year to ensure departments have more opportunities to directly present their priorities.

COMMISSIONERS' FRUSTRATIONS

Sheffield and Commissioners Kell Gambrell and JoAnn Birrell all confirmed Tesar had met with them individually to go over the revised proposal Monday.

Birrell thanked Tesar for setting up appointments and walking the halls with commissioners.

"Initially, when the budget was first shared with the board, we were asked for our priorities and listed all

of those. The departments had submitted all their requests, but a lot of them ... didn't make the cut. So now things are being reconsidered I guess," Birrell said. "And Buddy is walking halls, we're not hearing from each other or who's presenting." Birrell later told the Journal she believed the board "needed to have a clear proposal" before the first public hearing, expressing a desire for more communication, including between board members and the chairwoman.

Birrell acknowledged that, after accounting for rising operating costs and previously approved expenditures, there was limited funding available to accommodate additional requests. She said she was unable to secure support for her own priority of funding staffing for Precinct 6, while recognizing that several of the positions added to the proposal had been requested repeatedly by departments and addressed longstanding needs. Even so, she said the county should prioritize looking for ways to conserve money where possible.

Meanwhile, Gambrell said the repeated budget revisions left both commissioners and finance staff struggling to keep up. "I share your frustration," Gambrell told Sheffield, explaining she met with Tesar once in the morning Monday and again around 1:30 p.m.

"...And by 3 p.m. (the budget) had changed. In his efforts to present a budget to us, it changed three times, which is not only unfair to him and staff, but is also unfair to us as a board."

She said the board lacks a

transparent process for collectively deciding which requests should receive priority. "Yes, we have a binder book full of positions, but we never sit as a board to discuss the priorities," Gambrell said. "We leave it up to the chairwoman to walk the halls, keeping a spreadsheet of where each of us stands instead of having this open conversation dialogue here today."

She later told the Journal, "If this is truly the chair's budget, then the chair should be having the conversations with the Board of Commissioners not the finance director."

Gambrell also questioned increasing commissioners' office budgets while some departmental requests — including for overtime and other deputy positions — remain unfunded, and expressed frustration that the board has yet to address "the overspending that is happening by some departments," specifically pointing to the sheriff's office.

Cupid defended the budgeting process during the meeting, saying it has become more transparent in recent years with department requests and supporting documents now publicly available.

She acknowledged that demand always exceeds available funding.

"It is our desire to make sure that this is an open process, and unfortunately, the needs always outweigh the resources that we do have. It is a difficult thing, but it is a great thing when we are able to at least do our best to meet people where their



Commissioners Kell Gambrell, above left, and Monique Sheffield, above right, speak during the Cobb Board of Commissioners meeting Tuesday.

interests and where their needs are," Cupid said, adding she hoped to work with agencies whose requests were not fulfilled throughout the year in addition to during next year's budget process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Residents also offered their opinions on the budget during the county's first of three public hearings.

Andy Kingery, with the Cobb County GOP Election Integrity Committee, asked commissioners to consider adding a deputy director position for the Cobb Board of Elections and Registration, stating Cobb is the only large Georgia county without one.

Christine Rozman urged commissioners to curb spending growth.

"I think there's a common theme here: quit spending so much money," she said. "Another east Cobb resident criticized the county's proposed expansion of microtransit service, calling it 'financially irresponsible' and arguing countywide tax dollars should instead support services that benefit all

residents, such as public safety, parks and roads. Lily Trotter, a 20-year-old political affairs intern with The Borgen Project, spoke later during general public comment, encouraging commissioners to improve communication with residents and explain major budget decisions in simpler terms.

The Borgen Project is a nonprofit focused on making global poverty a primary focus of U.S. foreign policy. "I understand that all of you are very busy, I can't imagine what it is like being a government official... but I think just coming together and realizing we're all on the same team is very helpful," she said. "Sometimes it feels like it's an 'us versus them.'"

Commissioners are expected to hold a second public hearing on the proposed budget next week during a special-called meeting at 6:30 p.m. July 21. A third and final hearing, followed by consideration of the budget's adoption, is scheduled during the board's regular meeting on July 28.

Cupid is also scheduled to host two public town hall meetings which will include updates on the proposed budget at 7 p.m. July 22 at East Cobb Library and July 23 at Milford Recreation Center.

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FULLER

From A1

we knew, that was a part of the fabric of this state for so long, that Democratic Party is dead,” Fuller said. “It’s being taken over by communists.”

While Fuller often used the terms “communist” and “socialist” interchangeably to describe Kiros as well as other Democratic politicians such as New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, socialism and communism differ in key ways, and those that identify themselves as democratic socialists may not necessarily be communists.

The rise of candidates identifying themselves with democratic socialism, however, has alarmed lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle, including more moderate Democrats in the House and Senate.

Fuller said the ideological shift taking place within the Democratic Party makes it even more paramount that Republicans turn out for the November midterm elections.

“We have to re-energize ourselves. We have to redouble our efforts because we’re at a time that either we’re going to be the free republic that we’ve always been for 250 years, and that we fought for, or we’re gonna be communists,” Fuller said. “That’s the choice.”

Following his remarks, Fuller also emphasized the importance of passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or SAVE, Act.



Lucinda Warrike

Attendees listen during the Cobb County Republican Women’s meeting on Friday.



U.S. Rep. Clay Fuller, R-Lookout Mountain, speaks Friday during a Cobb County Republican Women’s Club meeting.

The act would require proof of U.S. citizenship, like a birth certificate or passport, to register to vote in federal elections.

The act has faced headwinds as it made its way through Congress, with the bill stalling in the Senate as Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, refused to bring it to the floor for a vote, arguing the act doesn’t have the required 60 votes to pass.

Fuller said the SAVE Act is vital to protecting Ameri-

can elections.

“I think election integrity is the No. 1 issue in our country,” Fuller told the Marietta Daily Journal. “I think when you talk about American elections, only Americans should be voting in, in American elections.”

Critics of the bill say it hammers home unfounded claims by President Donald Trump about fraud in elections, and media reports and fact check-

ers have said there’s no evidence for rampant voting by

non-citizens.

Those opposed to the bill have also alleged that it would prevent certain people from voting by adding unnecessary requirements.

Fuller dismissed the concerns, and said those saying it would make it unnecessarily hard to register to vote are just trying to frighten voters.

“If you want to vote, you’re going to be able to vote. The SAVE Act isn’t going to impact that at all,” Fuller said. “The criticism is there to scare people because (Democrats) want to cheat.”

Attendees were receptive to Fuller’s points, with applause filling the room following his remarks.

Beth Childress, a member of Cobb County Republican Women’s Club who attended Friday’s meeting, said she was excited to hear Fuller speak.

“I thought he was awesome,” Childress said. “I liked the emphasis on communism, that we’re turning to communism and we need to turn away.”

MILLAGE

From A1

Chief Financial Officer David Baker said the district maintained an 18.9-mill rate from 2007 until the 2023 reduction. He also noted the district eliminated its 0.9-mill debt service rate in 2007, paying off its long-term debt.

“The Cobb County School District has a history of keeping property taxes low and Cobb residents enjoy one of the lowest property tax structures in the metro Atlanta area,” Baker said.

According to Baker, the district’s final tax digest increased by 4.03% this year, closely matching the 4.08% increase projected when the board adopted its \$1.88 billion fiscal year 2027 budget in May.

The projected 4.08% growth in the property tax digest was expected to bring an additional \$29.3 million in local tax revenue to the Cobb County School District, according to the approved budget.

Baker shared that residential property, which accounts for about 71% of the district’s tax digest, increased in value by 4.18% this year. Commercial property, representing about 21% of the digest, increased by 7.05%, while personal property, utilities, motor vehicles and other categories — making up the remaining 8% — grew by 4.6%.

He added that the average estimated value of a Cobb County homestead property was just over \$510,000.

Though the tax rate is proposed to remain the same, a rise in property values would mean the owner of a home valued at \$500,000 would see roughly \$129.96 in additional taxes, according to the district. The proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$700,000 is approximately \$191.52.

Under Georgia law, rising property value assessments not accompanied by a corresponding millage rate “rollback” that offsets the increase in tax due are considered tax increases and must be advertised as such.

To collect the same revenue as last year and avoid an increase in taxes of 3.8%, the millage rate would have had to be decreased to 18.016 mills.

Board member Becky Say-

ler noted the fiscal year 2027 budget, which took effect July 1, was built assuming the 18.7-mill rate would remain in place.

“So if we don’t adopt this millage rate there would be negative consequences for salaries, which is 94% of the budget,” she said Thursday night.

Baker also highlighted the district’s property tax exemptions, which totaled an equivalent value of \$298.5 million this year, a 7.07% increase from last year. Nearly \$256 million of those exemptions came from the county’s exemption for homeowners age 62 and older.

Sayler questioned Baker about the nearly \$300 million in exemptions and how recently approved state property tax reform could affect future budgets.

Baker said district officials have begun reviewing the legislation and planned to take “a closer look” prior to the start of the legislative session.

Sayler asked the board receive additional guidance before next year’s budget process because the new law could affect future property tax revenues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Because the adopted millage rate exceeded the state-calculated rollback rate, Georgia law required the board to hold three public hearings before the final vote. Two hearings were held July 9, while the final hearing took place Thursday evening before the night meeting. One person spoke during the second hearing, and no one spoke during the first or final hearing.

While much of Thursday’s public comment was dominated by discussion of Trump’s appearance at Wheeler High School Wednesday, Heather Tolley-Bauer, co-founder of Watching the Funds Cobb, did question the district’s financial priorities, referencing the millage rate.

Tolley-Bauer noted the district’s budget has grown from roughly \$900 million in 2015 to \$1.88 billion and pointed out rising property values would still amount to a property tax increase despite the unchanged millage rate.

“(The budget is) more than double. And you still had to balance this budget by leaving 185 positions un-

filled and using reserves,” she said. “The millage rate sits at 18.7 mills. Flat, but it’s a 3.8% tax increase on tax-paying homeowners. And Superintendent (Chris) Ragsdale told us: this board will never lower the rate. So we’re going to keep paying more in taxes.”

She further criticized district leaders for not using Wednesday’s event to highlight Cobb Schools’ accomplishments or advocate for district funding, arguing instead the event became partisan after Republican elected officials and candidates addressed the crowd while local Democratic officials were not invited.

“Once again, you’ve proven who you really serve,” she said. “Since you didn’t showcase our district, didn’t include a single state or county Democratic leader and didn’t advocate for our kids, yet you’re increasing our taxes, here’s my question: how can we trust you to serve our kids and be responsible with our tax dollars when you clearly don’t like most of your families?”

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the

DATELINE ■ COBB

Whiskers on Wheels: Family skate night benefits cat rescue

Staff reports

On Aug. 10, Pounce de Leon Cat Rescue will host “Whiskers on Wheels,” a roller-skating benefit for homeless cats at Sparkles Family Fun Center of Smyrna, 666 Smyrna Hill Drive in Smyrna.

The event will feature music with a live DJ, silent auction, raffles and games. Festivities begin after school, running from 3:30 until 9 p.m. All ages are welcome. Wearing cat ears is encouraged. Admission is \$5 and includes skate rental.

Railroad Rendezvous

The popular Railroad Rendezvous will be 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 25 at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, 2829 Cherokee Street NW in Kennesaw.

Activities will include celebrating the railroad and all things transportation throughout the day. Visitors can experience the rare opportunity to step aboard The General locomotive and tour the cab of this historic steam locomotive. Visitors can also step inside the renovated Southern Railway Caboose X372 to experience what life was like for railroad crews during the golden age of rail travel.

For more information, visit southernmuseum.org.

Smith-Gilbert Gardens Special Deals Day

The Smith-Gilbert Gardens, 2382 Pine Mountain Road in Kennesaw, will on July 25 have a day of promotions for the whole family including:

♦ Garden with Wings admission included with general admission children tickets.

♦ Gardens branded water bottles for the first 25 visitors.

♦ Dog bandanas for Dog Day visitors, while supplies last.

For more information, visit smithgilbertgardens.com.

Powder Springs Community Taskforce’s 25th Annual Back 2 School Bash

The Powder Springs Community Taskforce in partnership with Isaac Okoro will present its 25th Annual Back 2 School Bash from 1 to 5 p.m. on July 26 at the Ron Anderson Recreation Center, 3820 Macedonia Road in Powder Springs.

Register one’s child to receive a backpack at <https://tinyurl.com/368bef7j>.

board approved a \$1.32 million contract with Toccoa-based Bowen & Watson to replace the softball field house for Campbell High School.

Thursday’s approval allows the project, funded by the Education Special Local Option Sales Tax (Ed-SPOST V), to remain on schedule with a substantial completion date of April 2027.

The new building will include locker rooms, public restrooms, utilities and offices, storage and additional restrooms for coaches. On social media Friday, Sayler said the project was “an exciting and necessary upgrade.”

The board also approved a \$15.13 million contract with Bremen-based R.K.

Redding Construction for an annex replacement, in accordance with the Ed-SPOST VI program, at Kincaid Elementary School. The project — expected to be completed by July 2028 — will include a new addition, secure vestibule, modernized restrooms, parking and site improvements and facility repainting.



IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NOTICE TO KENNESAW TAXPAYERS CITY NOT INCREASING TAX RATES

According to Georgia law, all taxing agencies must advertise a tax increase and hold three public hearings to claim taxes on reassessed properties even if the millage rate remains unchanged as is the case in Kennesaw. The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate equal to last year’s millage of 9.15 mills.

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Kennesaw has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 4.25 percent for M&O and 3.70 percent for Bond.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this increase are at Kennesaw City Hall Council Chambers located at 2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, Georgia on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 7.75 mills for M&O and 1.40 mills for Bond, an increase of 0.316 mills for M&O and 0.050 mills for Bond. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.434 mills for M&O and 1.350 mills for Bond. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$400,000 is approximately \$51 increase for M&O and \$8 increase for Bond and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$750,000 is approximately \$95 increase for M&O and \$15 increase for Bond.



Item Report

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM:
DATE: July 27, 2026
TITLE: Reports, Discussions, and Updates

Summary:

Recommendation:

Fiscal Impact:

Attachments:
None



Item Report

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM:

DATE: July 27, 2026

TITLE: 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.

Summary:

Recommendation:

Fiscal Impact:

Attachments:

None