

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

**Livestream: www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/
September 14, 2026
6:30 PM**

Present	Mayor Derek Easterling Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones Councilmember Madelyn Orochena Councilmember Tracey Viars Councilmember Jonathon Bothers Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez-Leon City Clerk Lea Alvarez City Manager Jeff Drobney City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr.
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1. Invocation

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Call to Order

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

4. Announcements

Councilmember Orochena inquired Mayor Easterling about the possibility of concluding the prior discussion regarding the natural playground in Depot Park, citing the presence of Councilmember Viars. Mayor Easterling indicated that this topic could be addressed under Council Reports and Discussions.

5. Presentations

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Committee and Board Reports

9. Public Hearing(s)

A. Final Public Hearing: FY27 Operating Budget

Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operating Budget for the City of Kennesaw.

The final public hearing and presentation will occur during the regular City Council meeting on Monday, September 21, 2026.

- B. **Final Public Hearing: FY27 Capital Improvement (SPLOST) Budget**
Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Capital Improvement (SPLOST) Budget for the City of Kennesaw.

The final public hearing and presentation will occur during the regular City Council meeting on Monday, September 21, 2026.

10. Consent Agenda

- A. **Minutes: August 31, 2026 Work Session**
Approval of the August 31, 2026, City Council work session minutes.
- B. **Minutes: August 31, 2026 Executive Session**
Approval of the August 31, 2026, City Council executive session minutes.
- C. **Minutes: September 8, 2026 Regular Meeting**
Approval of the September 8, 2026, City Council regular meeting minutes.
- D. **Minutes: September 8, 2026 Executive Session**
Approval of the September 8, 2026, City Council executive session minutes.

11. General and Administrative

- A. **Alcohol License: Nicky's Undeclared Kennesaw**
Consideration for approval of a Retail Pouring Alcohol License for Beer, Wine, and Sunday Sales for Nicky's Undeclared 2, LLC d/b/a Nicky's Undeclared Kennesaw located at 1300 Ernest Barrett Pkwy NW Suite 310 Kennesaw, GA 30144. Applicants: Michael Lo and Walter Gebelein III.

Business License Manager Kayla Willis presented a Retail Pouring Alcohol License for Beer, Wine, and Sunday Sales for Nicky's Undeclared 2, LLC d/b/a Nicky's Undeclared Kennesaw located at 1300 Ernest Barrett Parkway NW, Suite 310. The applicants are Michael Lo and Walter Gebelein III. The applicants have completed the required alcohol workshop per Kennesaw Code of Ordinances Section 6-69. Signs have been posted, and this hearing has been properly advertised per Section 6-36.

The current application and background checks are on file. A distance survey was completed by a certified surveyor and indicates that the business meets all distance requirements per Sections 6-42 and 6-43.

12. Public Safety

- A. **Crime Stats: August 2026**
Consideration for the acceptance of the August 2026 crime statistics.

Captain Kevin Mitchell presented the August 2026 crime statistics [see **Exhibit A**].

- B. **Purchase: PD Replacement Vehicle**
Consideration for approval of a request to purchase a 2026 Ford Explorer as a replacement vehicle for a 2019 Ford Explorer with residual Fiscal Year 2026 dollars.

Captain Mitchell requested approval to purchase a 2026 Ford Explorer to replace a 2019 Ford Explorer XLT, utilizing residual FY 2026 funds. The 2019 Ford Explorer's engine has failed, and the vehicle currently has 86,000 miles. Given its age and mileage, Ford does not recommend engine replacement. Available funds from the Police Department's budget include revenue from surplus items, such as Motorola radios and body cameras.

Councilmember Jones inquired whether this issue with the Ford vehicles would be recurring. Captain Mitchell asserted that this incident was likely isolated, noting that other Ford Explorers in their fleet are performing reliably.

With the consensus of the Council, Mayor Easterling recommended including this item on the Consent Agenda for the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

13. Information Technology

14. Public Works and Building Maintenance

A. Resolution: Landscaping at Depot Park and City Hall

Consideration for approval of a Resolution accepting the proposal from Creative Landscape Group to replace landscaping at Depot Park and City Hall.

Assistant Public Works Director Tim Cox presented a resolution to accept a proposal from Creative Landscape Group for landscaping upgrades at Depot Park and City Hall. The existing landscaping at Depot Park and surrounding the City Hall flagpole requires attention. Creative Landscape Group has provided a cost estimate of \$14,875 for the restoration and enhancement of landscaping at Depot Park, particularly in areas affected by Farmer's Market traffic. They also submitted a cost estimate of \$8,800 for the installation of sod around the City Hall flagpole. Mr. Cox confirmed that there are sufficient funds in the Public Works landscape account to cover these expenditures.

Councilmember Jones inquired about the sod installation at the City Hall flagpole. Mr. Cox responded that Creative Landscape Group would remove the existing sod, adjust the grading for proper drainage, and install new Emerald Zoysia sod.

With the Council's consensus, Mayor Easterling recommended including this item on the Consent Agenda for the upcoming regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

15. Recreation and Culture

16. Community Development

17. Public Comments

6:37 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

TIMOTHY HEYING [City Resident]: Mr. Heying reported the presence of a walking trail behind Kennesaw First Baptist Church, noting that a bridge is out. The temporary wood

laid across the gap is insufficient for safe crossing. He inquired whether funds were allocated in the upcoming budget for the bridge's repair. Interim City Manager Marty Hughes responded that the City received federal earmarked funds from the U.D. Department of Housing and Urban Development a few weeks ago to address this bridge and several others along the trail.

JORY LYONS [City Resident]: Mr. Lyons read a statement from Sam Rusch, expressing disappointment regarding the amount of trash in Woodland Park and the creek within it. Earlier this year, Mr. Rusch toured Woodland Park with Councilmember Bothers and conveyed his concerns about the trash, noting a lack of mutual concern from the Councilmember. Following an organized cleanup of Woodland Park, he stated that additional action is necessary. Further, he urged the Council to remove the chain at the entrance of Woodland Park immediately.

MATTHEW MAYO [City Resident]: Mr. Mayo, a lifelong Kennesaw resident and liver transplant survivor, requested the Council to urgently remove the chain from the entrance of Woodland Park, allowing safe access for him and his 10-year-old grandson. He expressed disappointment at the Council's inaction, stating it had let down him, his grandson, and his neighbors. He also mentioned that it was his understanding that no funds were included in the FY 2027 budget for upgrades to Woodland Park and inquired about the status of the proposed amenities. He reiterated the request for the entrance chain to be replaced with something that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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

18. City Manager's Report

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

Interim City Manager Marty Hughes had nothing to report tonight.

19. 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.

20. Council Reports & Discussions

Councilmember Orochena requested that the Council continue the discussion initiated in the previous work session regarding the natural playground at Depot Park. Mayor Easterling noted that Councilmembers Orochena and Gutierrez-Leon, along with Mayor Pro Tem Jones, expressed support for advancing the project, while Councilmember Bothers opposed it.

Councilmember Viars indicated willingness to explore the project further but cautioned that with the departure of the Public Works Director, undertaking detailed studies may

pose challenges for the staff. She acknowledged the necessity of a study to ascertain costs, highlighting concerns about potential safety issues at the park during large events, specifically regarding child supervision.

Mayor Easterling summarized the Council's consensus to investigate the feasibility of the park. Councilmember Jones reiterated that if the study reveals excessive costs, he would withdraw support. The Mayor instructed staff to identify funding to initiate the study process.

Councilmember Gutierrez-Leon inquired about the status of his data center moratorium request. City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr. responded that they must remain aware of ongoing legal developments related to the issue, emphasizing that the situation is legally fluid. He assured that Legal would provide an update for the Council's review at the next work session.

21. 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.

22. Adjourn

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m. The regular meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.

Lea Alvarez, City Clerk

August 2026 Crime Statistics



Group A Crimes	Aug 2026	Aug 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	2 (-3)	5	32 (+0)	32
ANIMAL CRUELTY	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
ARSON	0 (+0)	0	1 (+0)	1
BRIBERY	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
BURGLARY	2 (-2)	4	18 (-5)	23
DRUG/ NARCOTICS OFFENSES	31 (-10)	41	278 (+36)	242
EMBEZZLEMENT	1 (+0)	1	2 (-1)	3
EXTORTION	0 (+0)	0	8 (-1)	9
FORGERY	2 (+0)	2	16 (+4)	12
FRAUD OFFENSES	15 (-1)	16	135 (+19)	116
HOMICIDE OFFENSES	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
INTIMIDATION	11 (+2)	9	76 (-11)	87
KIDNAPPING	0 (+0)	0	7 (-2)	9
LARCENY/ THEFT OFFENSES	24 (+9)	15	99 (-10)	109
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	4 (+0)	4	18 (-5)	23
PORNOGRAPHY OBSCENE MATERIAL	0 (-1)	1	13 (+11)	2
ROBBERY	1 (+1)	0	3 (-1)	4
SEX OFFENSES	4 (+2)	2	24 (+4)	20
SIMPLE ASSAULT	12 (-1)	13	123 (+16)	107
STOLEN PROPERTY OFFENSES	2 (+1)	1	11 (-1)	12
VANDALISM	9 (-2)	11	42 (-8)	50
WEAPONS LAW VIOLATIONS	7 (+3)	4	36 (+0)	36
Totals	128	129	942	897

	Aug 2026	Aug 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Dispatched Calls for Service	839 (+48)	791	6,260 (+212)	6,048
Self-Initiated Activity	1,434 (-308)	1,742	11,772 (+469)	11,303
Traffic Citations	541 (-246)	787	5,445 (+524)	4,921
Traffic Warnings*	575 (-383)	958	4,828 (-1,426)	6,254
Arrests**	86 (-5)	91	675 (+27)	648

	Aug 2026	Aug 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Auto Accidents	113 (-2)	115	849 (+19)	830
Accident w/ Injury	7 (-2)	9	56 (-22)	78
Hit and Run	14 (-2)	16	94 (-7)	101
Hit and Run w/ Injury	1 (+0)	1	3 (+0)	3
Person Hit by Auto w/ Injury	0 (+0)	0	7 (+4)	3

* Warnings do not include verbal warnings

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Arrests do not include juvenile arrests

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 Work Session

9/14/2026

Public Comment Sign-in

Name

Address

Topic

1	Jory Lyons	2441 Forrest Dr.	Woodland
2	Matthew Mayo	2570 Woodland Dr.	Woodland Park
3	Timothy Hering	2059 White Oak Cr	Bridge
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