



City Council Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2026
10:00 AM

- I. The meeting was called to order by Mayor-Elect Hattie Portis-Jones.

Also present was City Administrator Tony Phillips, Assistant City Administrator Jamila Criss, City Attorney Rory Starkey, Deputy City Attorney Serena Nowell, and Deputy City Clerk Deannia Ray.

- II. Swearing In of Elected Officials:

1. The Honorable Judge Ewing swore in the following newly elected officials:

- Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones
- Council Member Anatavia M. Benson
- Council Member Shanita Nichols
- Council Member Ulysses Smallwood

- III. Roll Call by Deputy City Clerk, Deannia Ray found the following members present:

The Honorable Anatavia M. Benson
The Honorable Fannie Mae Houser
The Honorable Samuel Perry

The Honorable Linda J. Davis
The Honorable Shanita Nichols
The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood

- IV. The invocation was provided by City Administrator Tony Phillips.

- V. Pledge of Allegiance was in Unison.

- VI. Public Comments:

Mayor Portis-Jones asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add Public Comments.

Council Member Benson made a motion to amend the agenda to add Public Comments. Council Member Davis provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously**

Deputy City Clerk Deannia Ray said no one signed up for Public Comments. Mayor Portis-Jones asked if anyone wanted to comment. No response.

- VII. Adoption of the City Council Agenda

City Attorney Rory Starkey said he needs to make an administrative notation with respect to the agenda. The appointment for item number 3 will not be voted upon. Item numbers 4 - 6 will be voted upon.

Council Member Benson made a motion to approve the agenda with the amendments. Council Member Davis provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

VIII. Approval of the Minutes:

2. Approval of the minutes: Council Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2025.

Council Member Smallwood made a motion to approve December 8, 2025, minutes as written. Council Member Perry provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

IX. Regular Agenda:

3. Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem for 2026

Mayor Portis-Jones appointed Council Member Ulysses Smallwood as Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Fairburn for the year 2026.

4. Appointment of the City Clerk

Council Member Davis made a motion to appoint Deannia Ray as the City Clerk for the City of Fairburn for the year of 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Smallwood provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

5. City of Fairburn 2026 Meeting Schedule Calendar

Council Member Benson made a motion to approve the City Council 2026 meeting calendar for regular Work Session and City Council Meetings. Council Member Houser provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

6. Selection of the Legal Organ for the City of Fairburn for 2026

Mayor Pro Tem Smallwood made a motion to select the South Fulton Neighbor as the legal organ for the City of Fairburn for 2026. Council Member Davis provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

X. Council Comments:

Council Member Benson said I am ready to get to work and hope that everyone within the city is active. Seek us out, ask questions. When you see things on the agenda, approach us so you will know what is going on at all times in your city. Do not be afraid to ask if anything does not make sense. We ask that you ask your questions respectfully

and give us some grace as we learn along the way. I look forward to working with my colleagues and with city staff, you are all amazing and I trust and believe in each and every one of you and look forward to serving.

Council Member Davis congratulated all the new Council Members, and our new Mayor. I am excited about working with you, we have a lot of work to do. I think we can do it in the manner that we are used to, very professionally and collaboratively, to get the city going in the right direction. I thank our employees and citizens for being here, for your participation and interest in the City of Fairburn.

Council Member Houser thanked everyone for coming out today. I am elated to be a part of this council. I congratulate our Mayor, I know she will do a wonderful job as well as all of us. I get asked questions all the time and I will try my best to answer them and be respectful, and I am happy to continue to serve you, the residents, and the City of Fairburn. I am so excited about this new council, I know we will do a good job in unity, strength, and in love.

Council Member Nichols thanked everyone for coming out and for the support from the City of Fairburn and city staff. I am excited to be here, and I am excited to learn and to listen. I am excited to work in unison along with my council and mayor. Please give us grace as we are still learning and we are making sure to put Fairburn first but also making sure we are doing things the right way. I promise to be respectful and professional, but I am always going to stand on business. Just know you will always get that from me. I am here if you have any questions, I am an open book and I am here to serve the city and do what is right for our community.

Council Member Perry said thanks to God, for with him all of this is possible. Congratulations to all the residents of Fairburn on welcoming the new year. We had a lot of issues, and shouted out to the Police Department, city staff, and Fairburn Utilities for the safety of the city, it is always maintained. He congratulated the mayor and all new council members and said we look forward to working with you Mayor and maintaining a professional working relationship as we collaborate and move forward with the business of Fairburn. He shouted out to Ms. Betsy Wallace at Fairburn Manor, he worked with her on the heating and electrical assistance. She is a phenomenal person and deserves recognition for the stewardship and the care she provides to the residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Smallwood congratulated Mayor Portis-Jones and said I am excited to work with you. He thanked our world class staff from Police, Fire, Administration, and Utilities. You talk about how safe you feel in Fairburn and those are the people that make that feeling possible. Let's get to work.

Mayor Portis-Jones said I am a resident of Fairburn and have been here since 1996. I know this city and have served on council for twelve years and I know this government. Please be assured for those who know me, I am always about fairness, and I want to create a win, win. We all have to work together to collaborate and often times compromise, because there is never enough money and resources. My slogan has been and will continue to be, We are Better Together. I have experienced that being on this council, the accomplishments we achieved when we work together. I will work 24/7 to continue to make that happen, it will take all of us. That is what I ask and that is what I am expecting. I hope that we can walk in alignment with that thought. The road may be rocky along the way, but the bigger picture and the goal is what is best for all of us. Thank you and I look forward to seeing all of you this evening at Global Impact Academy for the Inauguration.

Mayor Portis-Jones asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss litigation.

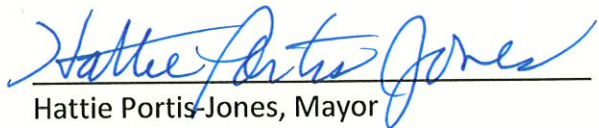
A motion was made by Council Member Davis to go into executive session to discuss litigation. Council Member Houser provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor Pro Tem Smallwood made a motion to return to the regular scheduled council meeting. Council Member Perry provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

XIV: Adjournment:

Mayor Pro Tem Smallwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 p.m. Council Member Davis provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**


Deannia Ray, City Clerk


Hattie Portis-Jones, Mayor