



*Town council work session meeting
Feb. 23, 2026*

Present: Mayor Chris Lelle; Councilmen, Eric Dailey, Sally Brown, Sharon Johnson, Mike Camp and Doug Koestel; Kathy Bridges, clerk, Jack Samuels, attorney

Visitors: Sandy McNab, Beth and Tommy Buchanan, Paul Brown, Jack Thomas, Branch director

The meeting opened at 7:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sally Brown made a motion to accept both the Feb. 2 and 16 minutes with changes to the Feb.16 executive session minutes. Eric Dailey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The first two items on the agenda were skipped due to the absence of the citizens.

Third on the agenda was an update on the code violations. Doug Koestel made a motion to proceed with an injunction against the 151 West Star Street violator. Sharon Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote. Koestel made a motion to also escalate proceedings against 128 Gifton Thomas and 29 West Star. Attorney Samuels said it would take him 2-3 hours to prepare the injunctions and the next step was a hearing through the Superior Court.

Paving projects would be bid out through RFPs prepared by the attorney, said the Mayor.

The house remodeling projects (16 Angel Street and 724 Manger Ave.) needed an architect to prepare an RFP, said the Mayor. Council people Eric Dailey, Sharon Johnson and Doug Koestel volunteered to work up a detailed specifications on the Manger Ave house and the roofs of the Angel Street house.

The Holiday lights bids were discussed. Wayne Ridgeway would install and take down the pole lighting and the roof line lights using the town's bucket truck for \$4480. Atlanta's Christmas Lights bid was \$19,335. Doug Koestel made the motion to use Ridgeway and town employees to put up the Christmas lights, Eric Dailey seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. Dailey made the motion to keep the bucket truck, Johnson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

The Mayor presented an update on the SPLOST VIII projects. Sally Brown made a motion to approve the Mayor's signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement, Eric Dailey seconded the motion, Johnson and Camp voted yes and Doug Koestel was opposed. The motion passed.

The Mayor asked the council to accompany him on a tour of cities one Saturday in March.

Lastly the council discussed the Branch Resilency Center's application for a sign to be placed at 54 West Star (the former Bethlehem Elementary School). He is renting the facility from the school system and has permission from the school system to place the sign, but CPL is denying his request because the use of wooden posts to place the sign do not meet the required structural and engineering requirements of the UDC (Unified Development Codes). Attorney Samuels said a variance would be required and a public hearing planned and advertised for March 23.

Sharon Johnson made a motion to add work sessions to the agenda. Doug Koestel seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Koestel made a motion to discuss CPL fees; Johnson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Sally Brown made a motion to add an executive session to discuss litigation. Eric Dailey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The council discussed work sessions. Johnson made a motion to have one meeting on the first Monday of each month with called meetings as needed. Koestel and Camp vote for the motion and Brown and Dailey were opposed. The motion carried.

The council discussed CPL fees and at 8:44, Brown made a motion to enter executive session. Dailey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

At 9:10 the council came out of executive session and into regular session and the meeting adjourned.