

City of Santa Claus, Georgia

Regular Monthly Council Meeting

February 17, 2026

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held February 17, 2026. Those present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Matt Lynn, Monte Powell, new members Walter Wright and Marcie Rogers, Secretary Sue Grisham, Eddie and Elaine Wright, Vince Meadows, and Ms. Jansen Killean. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of January 20, 2026, meeting was read. Monte made a motion second by Matt to accept the minutes. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes as read.

First business of the meeting was the swearing in of new council members Marcie Rogers, filling the seat vacated by the passing of Brenda Sells, and Walter Wright who is replacing Renee Wright who stepped down from the seat. Ms. Killean of The Tillery Firm, discussed options concerning the Duerfeldt issues, delinquent taxes, etc., with the council. She Presented an ordinance pertaining to this for the council to review. This was discussed at length with her agreeing to inquire with Anna Holcomb, Toombs County Tax Commissioner for further information on the procedures to be taken by the city.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council and discussed. The Gardens: Marcie will be overseeing this area and will need a key to the red donation box for the future. Council agreed that the landscaper will be responsible for the damaged lights in the Gardens due to lawn care. Park: Sue contacted Danielle David and she agreed to clean the restrooms at the Pavilion as needed. Monte stated that squirrels are still in the ceiling of the restrooms and it was suggested to put moth balls in there to deter the squirrels. Community Center: Walter will be overseeing the facility. The broken tile at the kitchen door floor has been repaired. Roads: The STOP sign at Reindeer ST and Sleigh ST has been re-erected. Ben Akins will be contacted for a bid on cutting the rights-of-ways on Rudolph, Reindeer and Salem as soon as possible.

The mayor added that we are still waiting for the last check from FEMA/GEMA for reimbursement for ER Assist fees and for copies of documents from ER Assist. On February 14, she sent an email to ER Assist and is waiting for a response on the pending closeout of Helene issues.

WADE Construction has completed the repairs at Gift Shop as apparently squirrels had damaged the wiring in the ceiling. He has gotten and will install the new lights at the Memorial Wall. After the security camera monitor was installed in the closet at the Community Center, the room was too hot due to no air vents in the door. As this is a fire hazard, WADE cut a vent in the closet door. There will be a table purchased for the unit to sit on in the closet as it's in a chair. Also, he will be installing new lights on the Memorial Wall that have already been purchased. Donita is checking on prices for replacements for the plaques on the wall due to the deterioration of the present ones.

Lesley Taylor has mailed out the 2025 1099's for city vendors.

February 17, 2026, - page 2 - New Business: The mayor visited the Toombs County Elections Supervisor, Carrey Alligood, requesting assistance with the Ethics Guidance Reporting filing correctly. Referring to council seats, Donita suggested that all council members fill out all forms required annually due to members changing numerous times to insure everyone is in compliant. After they discussed the council status, they agreed that: Marcie, (Post 3), and Matt, (Post 4), along with the mayor will be up for election in 2027. Also, Monte, (Post 1) and Walter, (Post 2) will be up for election in 2029. As new members, Walter and Marcie are required to pay \$18.00 each as election fees.

Donita received confirmation that the SAM renewal registration has been activated, required for grants. The Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) has been submitted for this year along with the SLREP and AARP grant. Stacie Avery has completed the annual audit and submitted it and delivered copies to us.

Sue Grisham attended a GMA sponsored City Clerk Lunch and Learn for District 9 on 2/11 in Vidalia.

Donita is awaiting a response to submitting the DCA reports and surveys for 2026 to clarify the status. She is also inquiring on the increase of city property taxes stating that Larry Hanson of GMA emailed that 2 bills are up before the House concerning this. Property owners are urged to contact local legislatures, Rep. Leesa Hagan and Sen. Blake Tillery, sharing our concerns.

The mayor attended a meeting held in the Toombs County Commissioners' office on 2/19/26. The meeting was to address the expiration of SPLOST on 12/31/26. The agreement with the county and city is for a period from the date of the agreement until six (6) years after the agreement. This is pending the vote by the county residents in the November election to pass or to cancel the SPLOST tax. At present, the city receives .65% and it will increase to .80% if it passes in the election. Originally, Santa Claus received 1% but was cut to fund the new courthouse.

Council discussed the city purchasing property owned by Barry Toole for approximately \$3,000.00. Walter made a motion second by Matt for the city to purchase the land from Barry Toole and agreed upon unanimously.

Mayor is waiting for an updated assessment from Hofstadter as the first one listed Dasher RD as part of Santa Claus and it is in fact a county road. She and Eddie are to meet with him on 2/18. Donita purchased a hand carved wooden snowman for decoration due to the deterioration of the blowups. She suggested purchasing other Christmas themed figures for decorations.

There will not be a meeting in March due to Marcie and Walter attending the state required Newly Elected Officials training in Tifton at that time.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham

Donita Bowen, Mayor  _____