

City of Santa Claus, Georgia

Regular Monthly Council Meeting

April 21, 2026

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held April 21, 2026. Those present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Matt Lynn, Monte Powell, Walter Wright and Marcie Rogers, Secretary Sue Grisham, Vince and Charlotte Meadows. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of February 17, 2026, meeting were read. Monte made a motion second by Matt to accept the minutes. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes as read. There was no meeting in March as new council members, Walter and Marcie, were at a state required training class in Tifton that week.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council & discussed. The Gardens: Marcie will check the donation box. Park: Monte stated he has not put moth balls in the restrooms to deter squirrels in the ceiling yet. Community Center: Walter tightened all of the door knobs. Donita placed a table in the closet for the security camera to set on. Roads: The STOP sign at Reindeer & Sleigh ST going east is missing. Matt will replace it & make a list of the street name signs missing so they may be reordered.

The mayor stated 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. Blake Tillery has been requested to assist on this. Donita thinks it is still in PENDING.

The new lights have been installed by WADE Const. and Donita is still trying to locate a source for new signs for the Memorial Wall. The ones presently on the wall are too tarnished to read. Akins has cleared the right of ways on Salem, Reindeer and Rudolph.

The mayor went to Att. Massie McIntyre's office and purchased the lot from Barry Toole for the city as agreed on by the Council for the amount of \$3,000.00. It's listed on Qpublic as 0.69 AC-Rudolph Way lots 1-4 in Santa Claus. However, the lots are on Reindeer ST. She will contact Anna Holcombe and ask for assistance in correcting this.

Since February, Donita has been waiting for a response to emails to submit the DCA reports and surveys for 2026 to clarify the status. On April 1, Lynn Ash Craft with DCA, emailed that she sent the emails to the research team in Atlanta who will be able to assist with this. Since, the city received an email to submit and was advised it has already been submitted and is completed. Donita reminded Council that she has signed the agreement with Toombs County for the SPLOST if it is passed by voters in the November election. At present the city receives 0.65% but, if the voters vote to extend the SPLOST for 2027-2032, the city will receive .80%

On 2/18, Eddie and Donita met with Hayes Hofstadter to review the proposed project agreeing that, to stay within the \$1 million project, the block on Candy Cane from US # 1 to Noel ST will be omitted. The mayor also reached out to Jessica Conant discussing her commissioning to carve more wooden Christmas themed figures for decorating the city which was discussed.

April 21, 2026, - page 2 - New Business: Donita stated that she had revised the January minutes to reflect some name changes and that there were enough surveys collected for the information needed to submit for the grant. Thanks to Marcie for her assistance in that. On April 9, Carol's Consulting & Grant Mgmt. notified Donita that she had successfully submitted the CDBG Application for 2026 for the city.

The GMA District 9 Spring Listening Session was on April 21, the night of our monthly meeting, so we had to decline the invitation. Donita contacted Jansen Killean of The Tillery Firm to inform her of the status of the Duerfeldt issues. Lots 1-4, referred to as The Tea Room, have been purchased and Cliff Duerfeldt has paid all monies past and present due to the city as of this date.

GDOT opened the submission for an additional LRA (LMIG Supplement) grant for 2026 in the amount of \$5,422.76 for the city. Donita has submitted an application and emailed the completed Expenditures Statement for the city, completing this on April 16, 2026. GIRMA terms for payment for 2026 were received in the amount of \$7,830.00. Matt made a motion second by Walter to accept the liability insurance terms with GIRMA for the city for 2026. Council agreed unanimously.

The subject of electing the mayor & council was discussed at length with the mayor explaining what she has discussed with Carey Alligood, Toombs County Elections Supervisor and the Georgia Ethics Commission. Motion was made by Matt not to collect election fees second by Monte. Council agreed unanimously.

The GMA Member Services Consultant, Artiffany Stanley, contacted the mayor to confirm that she is available to assist any council member at any time. Walter and Marcie stressed how knowledgeable she is about city government stating that she had individually offered them the same response. Ms. Stanley added that she is available to attend a council meeting any time to assist the council. Being a law enforcer, Matt stated he feels there should be a panic button for the office to receive rapid response from the sheriff's officers if there is an emergency. Donita stated this could be covered under a safety grant.

The Homestead Exemption is a hot subject for our state government in Atlanta in their session. GMA is stepping in to assist cities also. We have received a statement from EPD for us to mail out to all residents concerning the use of water in the state and the regulations they are requiring. I sent a letter from EPD to all residents with the April water bills. Matt stated he has met with Lyons City Manager Jason Hall and Mayor Willis NeSmith to discuss our sewage bill. This was discussed.

Walter has asked us to have Luis Nino to trim the Christmas Tree to shape it before next season. He will remove the lights for the tree to be trimmed.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned. Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham

Donita Bowen, Mayor

