

City of Santa Claus, Georgia
Regular Monthly Council Meeting

May 19, 2026

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held May 19, 2026. Those present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Monte Powell, Walter Wright and Marcie Rogers, Secretary Sue Grisham, Vince Meadows, Tim Horton, Eddie Wright and Elaine Wright. Matt Lynn had another commitment and was not present. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of April 21, 2026, meeting were read. Monte made a motion second by Walter to accept the minutes. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes as read.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council & discussed. The Gardens: Donita emptied the donation box for Marcie. Park: No issues at the Park. Community Center: Walter has tightened the tables and said that he would call Chad Edge to assist in getting the lights off the Christmas Tree so that it can be trimmed. Roads: Walter suggested lines be painted on the shoulders of the streets before Christmas Eve to place the luminaries in an orderly fashion. This would assist everyone to place them in the same order. Donita said she does not know if the Safety Grant will pay for the installation of a “panic button” for the office to alert the Toombs County Sheriff’s Office of an emergency in the office. Matt has suggested that he feels this is important for the safety of the office personnel.

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. She has sent several emails concerning this issue. The last response was that they show the check has been sent to us. As our mail delivery daily is often after the office closes, there has been a notice of a letter to be picked up at the post office which possibly is the check.

Due to the tarnished signs, Donita has been researching replacement plaques for the Memorial Wall. She presented the options with council agreeing on the Metal Designs price of \$1,392.00 plus shipping each for the two 18” X 14” plaques to replace the old ones. Monte made a motion second by Walter with all agreeing to purchase from Metal Designs the two signs for \$1,392.00 each plus shipping.

The mayor asked if Akin Tree Service has contacted anyone concerning spraying the weed killer on the areas where they cut the rights-of-ways. No one has heard from them. Council discussed other trees/limbs needing to be cut on Candy Cane ST and in the Garden. Donita contacted Bradley Williamson, Toombs County Tax Assessor, and informed him that the property purchased by the city from Barry Toole is in fact located on Reindeer ST and not on Rudolph Way as recorded by the county. However, the property updates are only done annually, so this will be corrected in January.

Donita has been in contact with Jessica Cowart concerning the wood carvings she designs. After much discussion with Jessica, she explained the prices to the council. The first wooden soldier will cost \$375.00 and the second matching soldier will be \$500.00. Going forward, Jessica is asking for a base price of \$500.00 per carving. Council agreed to purchase the two soldiers at the asking price. Discussion of future purchases was tabled until all of the council was present.

May 19, 2026, - page 2 - New Business: On April 29, the mayor received notification from GDOT that they have approved the application from the city for the LRA (LMIG Supplemental) grant for 2026 in the amount of \$5,422.76 to be received within 10 business days.

Donita submitted the application for the 2026 Safety Grant on May 8. The new Senior Manager of Loss Control and Prevention Services, Dennis Watts, provided answers to some questions she had. She explained the procedures required this year adding the sewer/wastewater inspection that she added was not on the previous list and is very important to the city. This was discussed.

On May 12, the mayor received notice from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality requesting our assistance in preparing the 2026 Health Insurance Cost Study. This will be sent out in June. The city does not offer insurance but is requested to respond.

Donita provided a handout on the latest information from GMA on Senate Bill 33 (Homestead Exemption) which was discussed. Council agreed to wait until the election vote to respond but that the city will agree on the status adopted by Toombs County. Hofstadter & Assoc. invited mayor & council to dinner in Savannah on June 27 with Marcie stated she was interested in attending. Must RSVP by 6/12.

Council discussed an email from Milton's mayor, Peter Jamison, concerning the sovereign immunity concerning litigations on behalf of the city. Council agreed to support this. Also, Daniel Gaddis (DCA) email concerning PlanFirst applications. Donita explained this stating that most of this does not pertain to the city. She suggested the city wait on moving forward for a better insight on the project.

Donita asked if the council has reviewed the Personnel Handbook she provided them. No one has reviewed it. Vince stated his concern of a truck frequenting the park about 7:30 to 8:00 A.M. most mornings & letting 4 large dogs run loose in the park. His concern is the safety of others. This was discussed.

Eddie informed the council that the plan for the lot at U.S. Hwy # 1 and Reindeer is to restore the building back as original as possible using the standing walls of the original Tea Room/Ceramic Shop. He also mentioned delinquent water bills with Sue and Donita explaining the procedures used by the city.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham

Donita Bowen, Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donita Bowen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.