

City of Santa Claus, Georgia
Regular Monthly Council Meeting

July 21, 2026

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held July 21, 2026. Those present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Monte Powell, Walter Wright, Marcie Rogers and Matt Lynn, Secretary Sue Grisham, C.J. Worden, Eddie Wright and Elaine Wright. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of May 19, 2026, meeting were read. Marcie made a motion second by Monte to accept the minutes. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes as read. Due to no quota present, there was no meeting in June, 2026.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council & discussed. The Gardens: No issues at the Gardens nor at the Park. Community Center: Walter tightened the railing on the front porch. The electric bill was excessively high and, after inquiring, it was decided the thermostat should be left on 76 when the building is unoccupied. Roads: Walter also installed the STOP sign at Reindeer ST & Salem ST.

C.J. Worden of ER Assist presented the Toombs County Hazard Mitigation Plan to the council for adoption by the city. He explained the Plan to the council and the alerts and other capabilities involved with the Plan to communicate with the residents of Toombs County. This was discussed by the council. Walter made a motion second by Matt to accept the Toombs County Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented. Council agreed unanimously to accept the Plan and signed the document. C.J. stated that he will send the Plan to FEMA on behalf of the city.

The mayor stated we have received the last check from FEMA/GEMA for reimbursement for ER Assist fees and she has been informed that copies of documents from ER Assist must be kept for 3 years.

The new plaques to replace the tarnished signs at the memorial wall have been installed by WADE Construction. The mayor asked if Akins Tree Service has contacted anyone concerning spraying the weed killer on the areas where they cut the rights-of-ways. Sue stated that Ben Akins called and the projects should be completed within the week.

Walter picked up the outdoor Christmas wood carvings from Jessica Cowart who negotiated the price to \$850. They are stored in the shed & will be placed at the Community Center in the near future. The mayor stated she returned the councils' signed amicus support to the City of Milton in support of their Milton v. Chang case.

New Business: Donita received notification that the application for the 2026 Safety Grant and it was approved for \$670.00 and not \$3,000 as expected. After negotiations with Dennis Watts, the \$3,000 was approved. She has contacted Clay Herrin of Southern Pipe requesting they run the CCTV camera in the sewer line on December DR between Sleigh and Dancer. Clay will contact her on the costs. Walter made a motion second by Monte to use the safety grant to have the CCTV run in the sewer line to try and alleviate the occasional excess bills as soon as possible. Council agreed unanimously.

July 21, 2026, - page 2 – Per Rachael of Tindall, the Consumer Confidence Report and Certification Forms have been submitted on behalf of the city. The mayor stated the DCA surveys for 2026 have been submitted. The Request for Release of Funds and Certifications, CCBG application has been submitted. Carol stated this is 5 bonus points for the application. Thus, the funds are already cleared to use.

After Johns Jones, Toombs County Manager informed the mayor, an ad was placed in the Advance concerning the LHOST for the legislature introduction of the bill for the homestead exemption. However, after several emails, Rep. Leesa Hagan informed Donita that the bill was voted down but, Leesa added, it will be presented again in January, 2027.

Donita explained the upcoming CDBG Summit On September 28th thru October 1 stating the city is required to attend at least on September 28 and 29, if we receive the grant. This was discussed with Matt and Marcie voicing an interest in attending.

Donita is continuing to provide information for the application as requested by GEMA and ER Assist concerning the Hazard Mitigation Program Grant for a generator for the water system and city hall. After receiving a notice stating the requirement of the city to submit our permit application to operate a public water system due in 2027, Donita has been in contact with Tindall. Trey Pearson of Tindall submitted the application on behalf of the city on July 21.

The mayor has renewed the QuickBooks subscription for \$2,210. She has also cleared some corrupted issues in the Database which cost \$1,253.00, a one time fee. Also, she has contacted the Juvenile Justice Department requesting that, if a defender is given community service hours in the sentence, they assist in the Christmas decorating for the city. Zeke Collins of JJD stated this is a probability. Donita will contact him in early October for confirmation.

On June 22, the pump at the lift station was pulled for repairs, per Darel Corley, and the lift station was cleaned out on June 30. Donita is working on the GDOT applications for 2027 LMIG Grant Program.

The subject of Air B&Bs in the city was discussed with Donita stating she has contacted the managers of both Lyons and Vidalia concerning this. After hearing that residents protested them, Walter made a motion second Monte not to allow Air B&Bs in the city with all council agreeing.

Georgia Rural Water Association offers classes for the city, per Donita. Notification was received on July 16 & 17 that Dish DBS Corp. has filed Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. Quarterly reports were submitted on 7/15.

After council stated they have not looked over the mayor's Personnel Handbook, Walter suggested they have a workshop to review the document. Sue added that there were clauses they should be aware of before signing the document into the city government. The Christmas tree will be trimmed in 2027.

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

Donita Bowen, Mayor 