**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**July 7, 2025**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was led by Mr. Brian Moore. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Josh Hill, Lois Allen, Greg Goolsby, Charles Wilder, and Mike Dodd. Also in attendance was City Manager, Craig Mims; Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie; City Attorney, Brian Causey; and City Clerk, Shayla Furlow. Not in attendance for the meeting was councilman Chris Hewett. Five members of the council were in attendance for the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be five votes (Hill, Allen, Goolsby, Wilder and Dodd).

**Approval of the agenda.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the minutes from the council meeting held on June 16, 2025.**

Mr. Hill offered a motion to approve the minutes from the council meeting held on June 16, 2025 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the appointment of Michelle Dublin to the Downtown Development Authority Board.**

Mr. Dodd nominated the appointment of Michelle Dublin to the Downtown Development Authority Board. Seconded by Mr. Hill; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a Resolution authorizing Electric Cities of Georgia to enter into a tax-exempt loan.**

Mr. Dean Nelson, the Community Development Director stated that the resolution states that Electric Cites will be authorized to enter into the “Loan on behalf of the City, within the meaning of Section 1.103-1(b) of the Treasury Regulations and Revenue Ruling 57-187, to finance the Project in an aggregate amount not to exceed $6.5 million with maturity dates not later than approximately 30 years from the date of closing, bearing interest at a rate or rates not to exceed 6%. Passage of the resolution allows Electric Cities to receive tax-exempt interest on the loan, saving approximately $70,000 per year with no recourse on the city of Forsyth. He stated that this resolution is what the Bank essentially needs as a documentation that ECG is an instrumentality of the Electric Cities of Georgia, with Forsyth being one of those. This qualifies them for tax-exempt financing from a bank-qualified loan. There is no commitment from the city. It will count toward the city's $10 million maximum per year for issuing tax-exempt bonds. The city staff recommends approval, and Mr. Walter West is here with Electric Cities of Georgia if we have any questions.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing Electric Cities of Georgia to enter into a tax-exempt loan. Seconded by Mr. Wilder.

Mr. Hill stated not to exceed ten million dollars and questioned if that was for the life of the loan.

Mr. Walter West stated that from his understanding which helps the city with their bond, there's a one-year calendar limit receipt of $10 million. This would be six of that $10 million for one year, and the clock resets after each year.

Mayor Wilson asked Mr. West to give a overview of what the project involves for those who don't understand.

Mr. West thanked the city, Mr. Mims, and the Mayor and Council, on behalf of ECG, for having the facility there. He stated that when they first started looking at sites, the Mayor came to them and said, there's a great one here, and that is the site that they picked after looking at some other areas. They purchased twelve acres and plan to build a 12,000-square-foot facility. He stated when you hire a line worker right off the street, there's about a seven-year training period to go from the ground and all the way to a top tier. They will train line workers throughout their career. They work with about eight hundred workers across the state. They also do management-type skills or soft skills training as well. This will be a hub for a state-of-the-art training facility.

Mayor Wilson called the vote on the motion to approve the Resolution authorizing Electric Cities of Georgia to enter into a tax-exempt loan. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit to** **allow clinic offices at 211 Tift College Drive, Parcel F35 051.**

Mr. Dean Nelson, the Community Development Director, stated that co-applicants Isabelle Tanner, property owner, and Amber Flannery, Live Oak Counseling, submitted a petition requesting the tax parcel located at 211 Tift College Drive be granted a Conditional Use Permit for a clinic to allow counseling services to operate on the property, which was formerly a single-family residence used for dwellings for Tift College. Individual rooms are now utilized as office spaces for tenants. Conditional use is a use that would not be appropriate generally or without restrictions throughout a particular zoning area. It is not automatically permitted by right within a neighborhood or zoning district, but which, if controlled as to number, area location, or relation to the neighbors, may be found to be compatible and approved by the governing body or city council within a particular zoning district, as provided in certain instances by this ordinance. An approval of conditional use runs with the property. This is from Section 2.1, Use Definitions. He stated that granting of the request for a conditional use at the clinic is defined by the Zoning Code and opens the door for other codes of use under that definition that may not necessarily be in harmony with the surrounding parcels. However, granting the request from the applicants in relation to opening a licensed professional counseling service should have no discernible impact on the zoning district. Mr. Nelson stated that on June 23, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing. There was no opposition to the petition. The Board voted to recommend approval of the conditional use of the parcel as a clinic.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for those in favor of or opposition to the proposed Conditional Use Permit to allow clinic offices at 211 Tift College Drive, Parcel F35 051.

Ms. Isabelle Tanner, the owner of 211 Tift College Drive, stated that the location has never been a single-family residence. It was a dorm for Tift students and then became a teacher's quarters for the house mothers and teachers that lived there.

There being no further public comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed Conditional Use Permit to allow clinic offices at 211 Tift College Drive, Parcel F35 051, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit to allow clinic offices at 211 Tift College Drive, Parcel F35 051. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for a Maximum Height Restriction Variance Request for CityTec Design, LLC, Parcel F25 014B.**

Mr. Dean Nelson, the Community Development Director, stated that City Tec Designs LLC, represented by Mr. Benjamin Vaughn of Vaughn Sundeen, P.C., applied for a variance to allow for the construction of a fourth floor of a dual-brand 95-room TownePlace by Marriott and Fairfield Inn by Marriott, in a Highway Business (HB) zone. The district normally only allows three stories, so they must request a variance to have the fourth story. The hotel development will be located on 3.41 acres of a tract within Monroe County Parcel F25 014B, which has been approved for subdivision and has been assigned individual parcel numbers for permanent addressing. The subject parcel is situated within the previously discussed Forsyth Storage Masters Project parcels on North Lee Street. The site plan and hydrology report were submitted to the Carter Engineering Group and has been approved. He stated that on May 26, 2025, there was a first steps meeting in which the developer and his development team met with city staff to discuss the project. The only issue that came forward was the issue of the three stories and the requirement of anything above requiring variance.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed Maximum Height Restriction Variance Request for CityTec Design, LLC, Parcel F25 014B.

Mr. Ben Vaughn stated that he represents CityTec Designs, LLC, and the principal owner of the project is Mr. Fred Kapadia. The ordinance requires a variance of more than a three-story hotel in the City of Forsyth. He stated that Mr. Kapadia has done several projects in the city, ranging all the way back to 1996 when he did his first project, a couple of suites in 2007 and La Quinta more recently. Mr. Vaughn stated that the size of the site makes the project infeasible from a probability standpoint unless they can get the four-stories to construct the hotel.

There being no further public comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed Maximum Height Restriction Variance Request for CityTec Design, LLC, Parcel F25 014B, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the Ma Maximum Height Restriction Variance Request for CityTec Design, LLC, Parcel F25 014B. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for a Setback Variance Request for 483 Cabiness Road, Parcel F33 032.**

Mr. Dean Nelson, the Community Development Director, stated that the City of Forsyth is represented by Mike Batchelor, the Public Utilities Director, has applied for a variance to allow for a 15-foot encroachment into the 40-foot required building rear setback in the Institutional Zoning District. The variance will allow for a 25-foot setback for the construction of the City of Forsyth Public Works and Public Utilities Headquarters, tax parcel F33 032, located at 483 Cabaniss Road. He stated that the existing building has become outdated and insufficient for the city's operating needs. This prompted the issuance of a request for proposals for the design and construction of a new facility. However, due to the size of the new structure, it cannot be in the same footprint, requiring the new structure to be situated in the rear of the property within the setback. Although the setback and non-performance requests are not necessarily the result of a grant partnership, the literal enforcement of the provision in the zoning ordinance would create an untenable situation requiring the total relocation of the Public Works Department Headquarters and the inability to combine an office space with public utilities. The applicant points out that currently an existing facilities garage is located within the setback and will remain in operation. Mr. Nelson stated that on June 23, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on the matter. There was no opposition to the petition and upon the closure of the hearing, the Board voted to recommend approval of the variance for the setback.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed Setback Variance Request for 483 Cabiness Road, Parcel F33 032.

There being no comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed Setback Variance Request for 483 Cabiness Road, Parcel F33 032, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the proposed Setback Variance Request for 483 Cabiness Road, Parcel F33 032. Seconded by Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Hill stated that with this being a government project he thinks that it needs to meet the threshold of what the public would think, and he wanted to ensure due diligence was done, with this being a publicly funded project.

Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utility Director, stated he believes all requirements were met. The original layout of the Public Works facility was in the center, which allowed larger vehicles to circulate around the back. With the size of the new building, that would not be possible. He stated that allowing the city to encroach and push that building back a little further allows a crossover and we can continue with operations that we have been on the site.

Mayor Wilson called the vote on the motion to approve the Setback Variance Request for 483 Cabiness Road, Parcel F33 032.The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of** **bid award to Falcon Design Consultants for building permitting and inspection services.**

Mr. Dean Nelson, the Community Development Director, stated that the City of Forsyth posted a Request For Proposals (RFP) to find a firm to undertake engineering and permitting services for the city. Eight firms submitted proposals. After review, it was determined that the city would not necessarily need engineering services as we continue in our contract with Hofstadter & Associates as the City Engineers. The city reached out to the eight firms that responded to the initial Request for Proposal (RFP) with an updated scope of work and responded to include just permitting and billing services. The responding firms were notified and given two weeks to rework their proposals to just include those two items. In response to this, two firms were both highly qualified and submitted their proposals. After reviewing both firms, which were Charles Abbott & Associates and Falcon Designs, the team of city employees scored the proposals and reached a consensus of choice. Staff recommend that Falcon Designs be chosen to take over permitting and review services for the City of Forsyth. The services will include assistance with updating a fee schedule to be comparable to other cities of similar size and assisting with the amendment to the service delivery strategy, which the Middle Georgia Regional Commission contracted by the state to perform. Falcon Designs will also assist with the implementation of a cloud-based permitting and billing system for this project. He stated that Falcon Designs proposed a 50% revenue sharing of permitting fees, which includes plan review and soil and erosion review. This allows the city to essentially incur no cost for this service. The percentage will be decreased by 30% for any project that exceeds 500,000 square feet. Mr. Brent Haynes is here with Falcon Designs if you have any questions or concerns about this project. He stated that just to reiterate, this will include an amendment to the service delivery strategy with the county in which we will be taking over billing permitting within the City of Forsyth.

Mayor Wilson questioned how does the city currently pay for the services?

Mr. Nelson stated that individuals applying for the inspections and permits pay for that directly to the county and the city receives nothing for it.

Mr. Hill questioned whether this cuts the county out of the process.

Mr. Nelson stated that it cuts the county out at 100%. The city would oversee all of our own permitting services. This would also go toward a cloud-based permitting service.

After a brief discussion Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the bid award to Falcon Design Consultants for building permitting and inspection services. Seconded by Mr. Hill; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Requisitions Greater than $6,000**

* **Electric Cities of Georgia- $72, 129.75**

Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utilities Director, stated that the requisition is for the final payment to Electric Cities of Georgia for full system asset inventory and GIS mapping for our electric system. All assets, including poles and underground transformers. This generates revenue from telecom companies that are attached to our poles. They must pay us a pole rental. He stated that this will bring us up into the digital age where we will have a GIS system of all our assets. This is the final payment.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the requisitions greater than $6000 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Wilder; the motion carried unanimously.

**City Manager’s Report**

The City Manager, Mr. Craig Mims, reported that:

-Big thank you to Main Street, Police, Fire and Public Works for helping put on a great event for the citizens of Forsyth on Saturday Night.

-Kynette Park renovations are scheduled to commence during the last week of August.

-The City’s annual financial report was submitted on June 27th.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Brain Causey, the City Attorney, had no business to report.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson stated that the Main Street event was a great event. It's a great thing to see people in the community coming out and being together celebrating. He thanked all staff involved and the city manager. Mayor Wilson congratulated Mrs. Lisa Roberts, Human Resources Coordinator, on receiving her Level one Certification as a Certified Human Resource Manager from the Georgia Local Government Personnel Association.

**Council Board Reports**

Mrs. Allen stated that the Convention & Visitors Bureau Board continues to work on events.

Mr. Hill welcomed Michelle Dublin to the Downtown Development Authority Board.

Mr. Dodd stated that they are finished with the grass at the golf course, and now it’s just a matter of watering the grass.

**Additional Business**

Mr. Wilder complimented the city for a great fireworks show.

Mr. Goolsby stated that one thing should be noted. We had two really big things happen. A lot of people didn't even know about Electric Cities coming here, the impact of what that is to have that training center here. He stated that people come up here with negativity about growth, how do you grow, and wanting to grow and don't want to grow. Tonight has two fine examples of how a city can grow without a big impact on a neighborhood. It's the things that you want to have that make a community great. He stated he was in Chick-fil-A and had to wait in line. The line was out the door, and he did not recognize one person in that Chick-fil-A. Every car in the parking lot was from another state. He stated they're getting off the interstate going to Chick-fil-A and seeing our beautiful city. Mr. Goolsby stated that Fred invested in another hotel in the city. The fact that he has come back and reinvested in this community with the brand that he's bringing for this hotel, and it benefits the community, is a big deal. Mr. Goolsby stated that people get off the interstate because they're going to stay somewhere where there's a nice brand, a nice community to stay, and they're going to spend their dollars here. He thinks it's just rewarding to see it and that it speaks volume to Forsyth and what we're doing.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Executive Session**

No executive session is needed

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:46p.m. Seconded by Mrs. Allen; the motion carried unanimously.