

CITY OF ELBERTON
REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
Monday, January 6, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council convened at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 203 Elbert Street with Mayor Graves presiding.

Present were: Council Members Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince and Parham; City Manager Eavenson, City Clerk Churney and City Attorney Jenkins.

Mayor Graves called the meeting to order and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. City Attorney Jenkins led the assembly in prayer.

Mayor Graves asked for nominations for Mayor Pro Tempore for calendar year 2025. Council Member Prince nominated Council Member Kyle Parham for Mayor Pro tem, seconded by Council Member Colquitt. Mayor Graves closed the nominations. Mayor Graves administered the oath of office to Mayor Pro Tempore Parham.

Mayor Graves asked for nominations for City Attorney for calendar year 2025. Council Member Colquitt nominated Steve Jenkins as the City Attorney, seconded by Council Member Parham. Mayor Graves closed the nominations. Mayor Graves administered the oath of office to City Attorney Jenkins.

Mayor Graves asked for nominations for Municipal Court Judge for calendar year 2025. Council Member Butler nominated Robert A. Johnson as Municipal Court Judge, seconded by Council Member Colquitt. Mayor Graves closed the nominations. Mayor Graves administered the oath of office to Judge Johnson.

Council Member Butler motioned to approve the minutes of the December meeting, seconded by Council Member Burton, and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham).

There were no scheduled speakers from the floor. However, Dr. Sophie Walsky of Drug-Free Elbert asked to speak to Council regarding the drug-free grant initiative. Mayor Graves welcomed Dr. Walsky to the meeting. Dr. Walsky stated that the purpose of the initiative is to cultivate a drug-free future for Elbert County through education, awareness, and support. It is dedicated to preventing youth substance misuse, specifically focusing on tobacco and THC/marijuana use among sixth through twelfth graders. She also introduced Alysia Poon who is assisting with the grant initiative through Elbert Partners for Health.

Council Member Parham introduced the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS: There will be a Municipal General Election held on November 4, 2025 to elect a Mayor and a Council Member each from Ward One, Four and Five; and

WHEREAS: The Official Code of Georgia, annotated, requires the Mayor and Council to set qualifying fees that shall be three percent (3%) of the total compensation received by the officials in the preceding calendar year, which is \$571.51 for Mayor and \$445.51 for Council Member; and

WHEREAS: The Georgia State Election Board, Sections 21-2-380.1, instructs the governing authority of each municipality to appoint and certify the appointment of an Election Superintendent/Absentee Ballot Clerk to the Secretary of State's Office; and

WHEREAS: The governing authority shall designate the City Clerk as Election Superintendent/Absentee Ballot Clerk; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved that the Mayor and Council of the City of Elberton do hereby issue a call for a Municipal General Election to be held on November 4, 2025, which will be conducted under the Georgia Code as amended.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Elberton do hereby adopt the qualifying fees and the appointment of the Elections Superintendent/Absentee Ballot Clerk as stated above as required by the Georgia State Election Board.

RESOLVED this 6th day of January, 2025.

City Manager Eavenson read the Resolution in its entirety. Council Member Parham motioned to adopt the Resolution, seconded by Council Member Burton and the motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Butler motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Prince and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Parham, Prince).

1. Authorized issuance of a Retail Beer/Malt license to Mohamed Jaffer Askari of JAZ Foodmart 2024, Inc. located at 351 N. Oliver Street. Mr. Askari is purchasing the former Shakti food Mart, Inc.
2. Authorized issuance of a Retail Beer/Malt and Wine license to Nazim Ratnani of ZYN Elberton, LLC located at 243 College Avenue. Mr. Ratnani is purchasing the former Bills Minit Market/Granite Nation, LLC.
3. Authorized issuance of a temporary On-Premises Consumption Beer/Malt and Wine permit to Elbert Memorial Hospital Foundation for Casino Night at The Rock Gym located at 45 Forest Avenue for Saturday, January 25, 2025.

City Manager Eavenson presented the following reports:

1. Financial Report ending November 30, 2024.
2. Monthly departmental report, as follows:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

In accordance with the Firefighter First Responder PTSD Program, House Bill 451 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the City of Elberton is required to make coverage available to full-time and part-time first responders. The coverage provides for a lifetime critical illness lump sum PTSD diagnosis benefit and a lifetime long-term PTSD disability benefit. Georgia Municipal

Association is overseeing this program for municipalities, which will be known as the GMA-GIRMA Georgia First Responders PTSD Program to take effect January 1, 2025.

The department will be participating in the Job Fair at the Elbert County Comprehensive High School next month along with a dozen other local businesses.

CITY CLERK:

The department will be mailing business license and permit renewal notices in January. The renewal deadline is April 1. Licenses and permits issued during the past five years have remained steady:

Classification	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Occupational Tax	316	295	304	287	250
Regulatory Permit	78	80	78	95	86
Professional	21	23	24	21	22
Financial	3	3	3	3	3
Insurance	255	289	275	285	298
Vending	10	10	13	8	12

At the January meeting, the Mayor and Council will consider adopting a Resolution to issue a call for the November 2025 Municipal General Election. The Resolution will also set the qualifying fees as required by the Secretary of State’s Office. The fee must be published in the newspaper in February. The election will include Mayor and Council Members from Wards 1, 4, and 5.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

The Fire Department responded to 51 Alarm Calls for December, 2024. The Fire Department issued two burn permits for the month. The department conducted 406 hours of in-house training and 18 hours of out-of-station training for the month as well.

Call Type	Number
Structure Fire	3
Vehicle Fire	2
Outside	1
Medical	30
Vehicle Accident	4
Gas Leak	1
Electrical	1
False Alarms	7
Mutual Aid	2
Total	51

BUILDING INSPECTIONS:

	Permits Issued	Inspections
Electrical	7	4
Plumbing	2	8
Building	5	5
Land Disturbance	2	0
Sign	1	0
Demolition	1	2
Mechanical	3	5
Roof	0	1
Total	21	25

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

The Elberton Police Department released their monthly activity for the month of **November 2024**. The department recorded:

- 751 Calls for Service
- 241 Vehicle Traffic Stops
- 70 Incident Reports were filed
- 188 City Court cases made
- 17 Traffic accidents were investigated
- 55 People were arrested for various charges
- 8 Person was arrested for Driving under the Influence
- 167 Department Training Hours

The Group A crimes of the (NIBRS) National Incident Based Reporting System are sent to the FBI on a monthly basis. The Group A crimes for **November 2024** are as follows:

	<u>November</u>	<u>October</u>
Kidnapping:	0	0
Rape Offenses:	0	0
Robbery:	0	0
Assault:	8	8
Arson:	0	0
Burglary:	1	2
Larceny/Theft:	10	10
Motor Vehicle Theft:	2	0
Counterfeiting/Forgery	4	2
Fraud Offenses:	3	2
Stolen Property Offenses:	0	0
Destruction/ Damage/ Vandalism:	5	6
Drug Offenses:	13	4
Weapons Violations:	2	2
Animal Cruelty:	0	0
Sex Offenses:	0	0
Prostitution Offenses:	0	0

WATER & SEWER:

The crews repaired water leaks on Lincoln Heights Drive, South Oliver Street, Hartwell Highway, North McIntosh Street, Fawn Court, Elbert Street, Grogan Circle, Old Hartwell Road, Brookhaven Circle, and Ridgecrest Drive. The crews installed new water taps and services at 1624 Melody Lane and 1421 Whites Chapel Road. The crews installed the fire line and hydrants for the new city fire training center on Calhoun Falls Highway.

The crews cleaned and inspected Evergreen Drive, Ridgecrest Drive, and South Thomas Street sewer mains.

The crews replaced the wash water pump on the belt press at Falling Creek Treatment Plant. The crews replaced the float isolation switch for the RAS pump station at the Falling Creek Treatment Plant. The Crews replaced the sludge valve on the belt press at the Falling Creek Treatment Plant.

The crews ran the belt press at the Filter Plant.

Work continues on the Fortson Creek Sewer Main Replacement/Relocation Project. The 18" clay effluent line located between the chlorine contact chamber and the outfall was replaced

with a new 18" plastic effluent line. Work on the creek bank stabilization continues and is expected to be completed by mid-January.

ELECTRIC:

During the month of December the Electric Department installed a new pole and transformer at Lewis Continental on Tate Street. The crew also rebuilt a CT meter base at Armour Wood Works. The department cleaned the warehouse and the lot and organized transformers. The department pulled and disposed of five poles and removed a line on Tate Street Extension. The department changed out a pole on Oglesby Blvd and replaced a bad transformer at the rock crusher. The department finished out the month working on the Matthews Granite expansion by adding a 2500 kva transformer and installing underground cable.

GAS:

Compliance: emergency manual updates, public awareness plan, operator qualifications training, distribution gas leak survey and turning of in-ground critical valves. Additionally, locates, emergency locates, and distribution patrolling of gas system and cleaning of district stations were performed.

Several customers have requested to upgrade meters from small residential AC 250 meters to large residential AC630 meters. Most of this is due to whole home generators being added.

The City received new gas service inquiries on Jones Ferry road, two on Bowman Hwy along with one service abandoned at 1384 Calhoun Falls Hwy. Additionally, a gas service riser was removed from a Mill street house being demolished. New service was turned on at the Coffee Shop on Elbert Street.

PUBLIC WORKS:

The second downstairs unit of the Bailey Building is complete. The final cleaning will need to be completed. Currently, there are local vendors interested in leasing the unit, but no commitments at this time.

The two upstairs residential units are nearing completion and are anticipated to be complete by January 31st. Currently, there is a waiting list for tenants.

The street department is working to complete the final grading at the fire training facility.

ELBERT THEATRE & ELBERTON ARTS CENTER:

There have been 37 events at the Elbert Theatre & Arts Center from Nov 22-Dec 26 including *Wicked* & *Mufasa* movies; Encore Productions' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* rehearsals, performances & cast party and *Spitfire Grill* rehearsals; Elbert Theatre Foundation's bake sale, Christmas movie field trips & paint class; St Alban's luncheon and L Harper's concert.

Approximately 4,254 patrons have visited the Elbert Theatre & Elberton Arts Center between Nov 22-Dec 26.

MAIN STREET ELBERTON:

Main Street held its annual Candle Light Shop Night on Tuesday, November 26. This event was very well attended by the community. We had approximately 30 local vendors set up at this event. We partnered with Santa's Sleigh to bring in additional vendors this year. All vendors said that they had a very good turnout, as did our downtown merchants and restaurants.

Our Santa's letter mailbox did extremely well on the square this year with nearly 300 letters dropped off by the community. Each letter received a return letter from "Santa". We received

very positive feedback from the community this year on the Santa's mailbox and return letter's from Santa!!

ELBERT HOTEL:

December & January have been historically lower in regards to annual occupancy. In an effort to drive numbers for January, we will be offering a Winter Staycation option to locals, including events at the Elbert Theatre and other local businesses the weekend of January 26th.

The restaurant played host to numerous businesses and organizations for their annual Christmas Parties. We implemented additional staffing to ensure we provided top notch service. A few have already booked their 2025 party!

During the week of Christmas break we have been busy deep cleaning the restaurant. We will also be taking care of much needed repairs in the restaurant and hotel.

The latest occupancy statistics are as follows:

	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY 23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>
July	31.4%	39.4%	23.8%	40.4%	62.8%
August	33.9%	40.0%	37.2%	47.0%	41.3%
September	31.5%	40.1%	48.0%	46.7%	55.3%
October	34.0%	46.7%	53.9%	55.3%	65.8%
November	31.5%	49.0%	53.6%	58.0%	44.8%
December	20.8%	36.3%	38.0%	32.7%	28.0%
January	28.9%	23.5%	40.6%	30.3%	
February	32.7%	39.2%	40.5%	46.0%	
March	32.7%	41.0%	51.9%	51.6%	
April	38.5%	46.8%	60.0%	53.8%	
May	43.7%	49.9%	59.7%	44.8%	
June	38.5%	41.5%	39.8%	50.8%	
AVERAGE	33.2%	41.1%	45.6%	46.5%	

There being no further business to come before Council, upon proper motion and second the meeting the Mayor and Council was adjourned.