

CITY OF ELBERTON
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
Monday, July 7, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof the meeting of the Mayor and Council convened at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 7, 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 Acting City Attorney Whetsel.

Mayor Graves called the First Public Hearing to order. A Notice of Hearing was issued pursuant to violation of Elberton Code of Ordinances Section 10-43.1(1)(2). City Manager Eavenson explained the purpose of the hearing was to consider suspending or revoking the business license known as Wade's Garage located at 135 E. Railroad Street.

Acting City Attorney Whetsel provided a summary of the code violations as follow: (i) the business or establishment is a threat or nuisance to public health, safety, or welfare [Section 10-43.1(b)(8)]; (ii) the business fails to conduct business in a professional, honest, and legal manner [Section 10-43.1(b)(10)]; (iii) any other violation of this article [Section 10-43.1(b)(12)]; and (iv) violation of another statute, ordinance rule, or regulation that governs the operation of the business in question [Section 10-43.1(b)(13)].

Police Chief Marunich provided a list of responses to the property over the past six years. There had been twenty-three calls ranging from terroristic threats, disorderly conduct, public drunk, theft by taking, possession of drugs, rape, animals running at large, etc.

Fire Marshal Darren Driver provided a list of fire and life safety codes that are in violation for the property. The violations were for obstruction of egress pathways, improper electrical wiring and extension cord use, improper use of electric heaters, unpermitted or substandard construction, accumulation of combustible materials as well as improper exit signage and illumination.

Zoning Officer Mooney followed up with a letter of recommendation to suspend the business license for sixty (60) days to give the owner, Wade Mielitz, sufficient time to come into compliance with all building and property codes.

Mr. Wade Mielitz, the property owner, stated that he was already working on cleaning up the property and that the recommendation to suspend his license for sixty days was sufficient.

Mayor Graves stated that Council would consider the letter of recommendation later in the meeting pursuant to Elberton Code of Ordinances Section 10-43.2(d). Therefore, Mayor Graves adjourned the public hearing at 5:40 p.m.

Mayor Graves called the Second Public Hearing to order as required by Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to the proposed plan of finance for the issuance by the Housing Authority of Macon-Bibb County.

Mr. Jamie Garner of Butler Snow, LLP was present to speak on behalf of the bond counsel for the bond issuance by the Housing Authority of Macon-Bibb County. The proceeds will be loaned to CAHEC Properties to fund significant renovations to 13 housing facilities throughout the state including Oak Lane Apartments on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Elberton.

Mayor Graves stated that Council would consider adopting a Resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds later in the meeting. Therefore, Mayor Graves adjourned the second public hearing at 5:45 p.m.

Mayor Graves called the regular meeting to order, led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, and in prayer.

Council Member Butler motioned to approve the minutes of the June 2nd and 16th meetings, seconded by Council Member Parham, and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham).

Mayor Graves stated that Mr. Freddie Baker was scheduled to update Council on the Concerned Men of Elbert County organization; however, something came up and he will give the update at the August meeting.

Mayor Graves took the opportunity to recognize the Elberton-Mure Sister City Ambassadors for 2025. The group will be leaving for Mure-cho, Japan on Wednesday, July 9th. The Sister City Selection Committee met in March to select six participants for this summer. Those selected were: Kevin Jeffords (chaperone), Maiya Alcalde, Marley Geyer, Ty Johnson, Tristan McCall, and Kennedy Ray. The Mayor and Council wished the group safe travels.

Council Member Prince placed Ordinance 2228 on Second Reading to amend the comprehensive zoning map to rezone 47 W. Church Street and 234 S. Thomas Street:

ORDINANCE 2228

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF ELBERTON; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Council Member Parham motioned to waive the reading, seconded by Council Member Prince, and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham). City Manager Eavenson read the Ordinance in its entirety at the June meeting. Council Member Parham motioned to adopt the Ordinance, seconded by Council Member Prince and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham).

Council Member Parham introduced a Resolution appointing a member to the Downtown Development Authority:

CITY OF ELBERTON RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, there currently exists a vacancy on the Elberton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) board of directors; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. Section 36-42-6 allows the governing body of the municipal corporation to appoint directors of the DDA by resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and five Council Members of the City of Elberton constitute the governing body pursuant to that state law O.C.G.A. Section 36-42-3; and

WHEREAS, the Elberton DDA board of directors received a formal resignation from Mr. John Jenkins; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor respectfully submits to the Council the name of Ms. Mallory Smith to be considered to fill the vacancy on the board of directors of the DDA; and

WHEREAS, the appointee meets the qualifications of being a director of the Elberton DDA in that certain state law O.C.G.A. Section 36-42-7, being that the nominee qualifies as (a) persons who has an economic interest in the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown development area.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of the City of Elberton hereby appoint Ms. Mallory Smith as a director of the Elberton DDA, term to end June 30, 2027.

RESOLVED this 7th day of July, 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 (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham).

Council Member Prince introduced a Resolution approving the downtown master plan:

CITY OF ELBERTON

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Department of Economic Development have established the Georgia Rural Zone program that offers tax incentives to revitalize rural downtown areas by encouraging job creation, investment in downtown properties, and renovation of existing buildings; and

WHEREAS: To apply for the Georgia Rural Zone program, the City of Elberton must meet the eligibility requirements through an application process; and

WHEREAS: The City of Elberton has applied for assistance from the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission in preparing the application for the 2025 cycle of the Georgia Rural Zone program; and

WHEREAS: To comply with the program requirements, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission has made minor updates to the Downtown Master Plan that the Carl Vinson Institute performed in 2023 to incorporate elements that the Georgia Rural Zone program requires; and

WHEREAS: The updated Downtown Master Plan has been reviewed by the City Manager; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council believe the Downtown Master Plan provides a clear vision by outlining strategic actions in order to create a strong foundation for future prosperity within the downtown.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council hereby approve and adopt the official Downtown Master Plan for the City of Elberton, attached hereto as Exhibit “A”.

RESOLVED this 7th day of July, 2025.

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

Council Member Butler introduced a Resolution authorizing the issuance of bonds:

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF MACON-BIBB COUNTY
TO ISSUE BONDS TO FINANCE FACILITIES
LOCATED IN THE CITY OF ELBERTON**

WHEREAS, CAHEC Properties Corporation and/or one or more affiliates thereof (collectively, the “**Borrowers**”) desire to acquire, construct, renovate, furnish and equip residential rental housing communities in various locations within the State of Georgia, the names and addresses of said properties are attached hereto as Exhibit A (collectively, the “**Projects**”); and

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2023, the Housing Authority of Macon-Bibb County (the “**Macon-Bibb County Housing Authority**”) adopted a preliminary resolution, as amended on June 13, 2024, under which it agreed in principle to issue its revenue bonds or other appropriate obligations (the “**Bonds**”) and to lend the proceeds of the Bonds to the Borrowers for the purpose of financing the acquisition, construction, renovation, furnishing and equipping of the proposed Projects, in furtherance of the purposes of O.C.G.A. Section 8-3-1, *et seq.*, as amended (the “**Housing Authorities Law**”); and

WHEREAS, among the facilities proposed to be acquired, constructed, renovated, furnished and equipped with a portion of the proceeds of the Bonds is Oak Lane, an existing 24-unit residential rental housing community located at 344 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Elberton, Georgia (the “**Facilities**”) that will be owned and operated by the Borrowers; and

WHEREAS, after publication of a notice at least 7 days prior to the date of this resolution, which notice of the hearing was published in *The Elberton Star*, a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Elberton, Georgia (the “**City**”), on this date a public hearing was held regarding the Bonds and the Projects being financed with the proceeds of the Bonds; and

WHEREAS, one of the purposes of this resolution is to satisfy the public approval requirement of Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “**Code**”) in order to qualify the interest on the Bonds for exclusion from the gross income of the owners thereof for federal income tax purposes pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Code; and

WHEREAS, another purpose of this resolution is to satisfy the Housing Authorities Law (the “**Act**”), specifically O.C.G.A. § 8-3-3(1), which provides that the authority’s “area of operation” is defined as “such city and the area within ten miles of the territorial boundaries thereof but does not mean any area which lies within the territorial boundaries of any other city unless a resolution shall have been adopted by the governing body of such other city declaring that there is a need for the city housing authority to exercise its powers within the territorial boundaries of said other city. No city, county, regional, or consolidated authority shall operate in any area in which an authority already established is operating without the consent by resolution of the authority already operating therein;” and

WHEREAS, THE BONDS SHALL NOT EVER REPRESENT OR CONSTITUTE A DEBT OR PLEDGE OF THE FAITH AND CREDIT OR THE TAXING POWER OF THE CITY OF ELBERTON OR ANY OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AND SHALL SOLELY BE SECURED AND PAYABLE FROM COLLATERAL PROVIDED BY THE BORROWER.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED and it is hereby resolved by the City Council of the City of Elberton, Georgia as follows:

1. For the sole purpose of complying with the Act, the issuance of the Bonds by the Macon-Bibb County Housing Authority in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$30,000,000 and the acquisition, construction, renovation, furnishing and equipping of the Facilities with a portion of the proceeds of the Bonds is necessary and approved.

2. For the sole purpose of qualifying the interest on the Bonds for exclusion from the gross income of the owners thereof for federal income tax purposes pursuant to applicable provisions of the Code and satisfying the provisions of the Act, the issuance of the Bonds by the Macon-Bibb County Housing Authority in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$30,000,000 and the acquisition, construction, renovation, furnishing and equipping of the Facilities with a portion of the proceeds of the Bonds is approved.

3. This approval is given solely for the purpose of compliance with provisions of the Code and the Act and in no event shall this approval constitute any obligation on the part of the City of Elberton with respect to the Bonds.

This the 7th day of July, 2025.

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

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

1. Approved the expenditures that exceed the City Manager's purchasing authority.
2. Authorized the closing of various streets to vehicular traffic on Thursday, September 18 for the Homecoming Parade and Pep Rally hosted by ECCHS Cheerleaders and Student Council.
3. Authorized the closing of the public square to vehicular traffic on Friday, October 31 for the Skelebration hosted by Main Street Elberton.
4. Authorized the closing of the public square to vehicular traffic on Saturday, November 1 for the Fall Festival hosted by Main Street Elberton.
5. Authorized the closing of the public square to vehicular traffic on Tuesday, November 25 for the Candlelight Shop Night/Tree Lighting hosted by Main Street Elberton.
6. Authorized the closing of the public square to vehicular traffic on Tuesday, December 9 for the 4th Annual Cookie Crawl hosted by Main Street Elberton.
7. Authorized the issuance of an on-premises consumption of wine license to Ms. Jian P Xiao of Hunan Buffet located at 929-B Elbert Street.

City Manager Eavenson provided the following reports in the packets:

1. Financial Report ending May 31, 2025.
2. Monthly departmental report, as follows:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

The department submitted the 2025 census data for the GMA-GIRMA First Responder PTSD Benefit Program (FCBP). Participation in this program is required by HB 451.

The department submitted the 2025 Government Management Indicators (GOMI) Survey as required by the Department of Community Affairs as required by OCGA 36-81-8.

CITY CLERK:

Staff attended the election training held in Savannah hosted by GMA. The training covered basic information and changes in the election law since the last municipal election.

The Elberton Historic Preservation Commission met on Tuesday, June 17 to discuss upcoming training opportunities and goals for the remainder of 2025.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

The Fire Department responded to 73 alarm calls. The department issued two burn permits.

Training efforts included 605 hours of in-house training and 40 hours of training center usage.

Building Fires	3
Cooking Fire	1
Medical Assists	47
Vehicle Accidents	6
Rescue/Elevator Call	1
Gas Leak	1
Electrical Shortages	2
Service Call	1
Canceled in Route	1
False Alarms	8
Storm Cleanup	1
Citizen Complaint	1
Total	73

BUILDING INSPECTIONS:

	Permits Issued	Inspections
Electrical	4	5
Plumbing	4	1
Building	3	2
Demolition	2	3
Sign	0	1
Mechanical	1	7
Roof	2	2
Pool	0	1
Total	16	22

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

The Elberton Police Department released their monthly activity for the month of **May 2025**. The department recorded:

- 880 Calls for Service
- 291 Vehicle Traffic Stops
- 79 Incident Reports were filed
- 295 City Court cases made
- 29 Traffic accidents were investigated
- 53 People were arrested for various charges
- 10 Person was arrested for Driving under the Influence
- 1,748 Department Training Hours (1600 in Academy Training the two new officers)

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 **May 2025** are as follows:

	<u>May</u>	<u>April</u>
Kidnapping:	0	1
Rape Offenses:	0	0
Robbery:	0	0
Assault:	11	11
Arson:	0	0
Burglary:	0	3
Larceny/Theft:	5	11

Motor Vehicle Theft:	1	1
Counterfeiting/Forgery	0	0
Fraud Offenses:	2	0
Stolen Property Offenses:	1	0
Destruction/ Damage/ Vandalism:	5	4
Drug Offenses:	11	7
Weapons Violations:	3	1
Animal Cruelty:	0	0
Sex Offenses:	0	1
Prostitution Offenses:	0	0

WATER & SEWER:

The crews installed water taps and services at 130 Clairmont Avenue and 1002 Sam Paul Road. The crews raised valve boxes on Rhodes Drive for paving. The crews repaired leaks on North Thomas Street at the city fire department, Lincoln Heights, Seaboard Street, Mill Street, and Lake Forest Drive. The crews replaced a fire hydrant at 55 West Railroad Street that was damaged in a vehicle accident. The crews cut grass at all tanks in the water system. The crews poured back sidewalk cut on Church Street. The crews asphalted a utility cut on Church Hill Road. The crews worked on the annual warehouse inventory.

The crews cleaned and inspected sewer mains and laterals on Clairmont Avenue, Pulliam Street, South Tusten Street, Knight Street, McGinity Street, and Hillcrest Avenue. The crews raised manholes on Rhodes Drive for paving. The crews cut grass at all lift stations in the sewer system.

The crews pulled the #1 equalization pump at the Fortson Creek Treatment Plant for repairs. The crews made repairs to the equalization pump control panel at Fortson Creek Treatment Plant.

The crews pulled the #1 Raw Water Pump motor for repairs and replaced it when repairs were completed. The crews rebuilt the caustic feed pump at the Filter Plant.

SPLASH PARK PROJECT:

The splash park construction continues to progress. The installation of all features is complete. The support building has been painted, electricians are working to complete all wiring, HVAC duct work has been installed, and graders are working on grading for the parking lot areas.

ELECTRIC:

- Replaced four poles on Mill Street, one pole on Second Street, three poles on the Calhoun Falls Hwy, one pole on Kathwood Drive, one pole on Heard Street and two poles on Park Street.
- Replaced a traditional light at Thornton’s Pawn Shop.
- Removed two poles at the Gun Club.
- Replaced two three phase poles, one single phase pole, two broken cross arms, 16 broken services and two bad transformers due to storm damage.
- Installed a pole on Lexington Hwy for a new service.
- Installed a new pad mount transformer and 300 feet of underground primary on Lake Forest for a new customer.
- Energized 2500 kva padmount at Mollertech.
- Installed underground services on Park Street and Victory Road.
- Year-end inventory count

GAS:

- Completed service install at 1205 Hunt Road.
- Installed service at 1561 Hartwell Highway.
- 80 to 90% completed on the Bowman Highway Chicken house gas install.
- Completed Operator Qualification Training with SRCS Gas Authority Jayson Davis and manufacture Trenton Corporation on new steel pipe protective line wrap.
- Performed In-ground Emergency Valve Maintenance - locate and clean valve boxes to ensure proper operation of gas shut off valves.
- Performed routine maintenance of regulator station farm taps – cutting grass, spraying weed killer, and painting

PUBLIC WORKS:

- The Heard Street/First Baptist Church project continues. All of the curbing and sidewalk along Heard Street is complete along with the three new driveway entrances. Currently, the curbing for the landscaping planters are being completed.

ELBERT THEATRE & ELBERTON ARTS CENTER:

There have been 39 events at the Elbert Theatre & Arts Center from May 23, 2025-June 26, 2025 including Elbert County Comprehensive High School’s graduation holding, *Last Rodeo* and *Karate Kid Legends* movies; Encore Productions’ *Puffs* rehearsals and *Kong’s Night Out* auditions; Shokoa Plummer’s theatrical play; the Elbert Theatre Foundation’s Kids Camp, *Lion King Kids* performance and paint class.

Approximately 1,066 patrons have visited the Elbert Theatre & Elberton Arts Center between May 23, 2025-June 26, 2025.

ELBERT HOTEL AND QUARRY:

Hotel:

- June occupancy was lower than average - reservations are down nationally for the month of June.
- Continuing to explore avenues to better promote and advertise for the hotel.
- Currently in the planning phase of the Hotel's 100th Anniversary Celebration - August marks 100 years - looking to host on the evening of Saturday, September 6th.

Quarry:

- Hosted a successful Father's Day Brunch on Saturday, June 14th along with Father's Day Lunch on Sunday, June 15th - great turnout for both.
- Hosted our first Live Music event on the patio with Madison & Jennifer Clements on June 28th - Incredible turn out - Restaurant and bar did very well as a result.
- Revising menu to better align prices based on current food costs. Plan is to launch a revised menu on Tuesday, July 7th upon returning from the July 4th holiday.

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%	30.3%
February	32.7%	39.2%	40.5%	46.0%	37.0%
March	32.7%	41.0%	51.9%	51.6%	36.0%
April	38.5%	46.8%	60.0%	53.8%	50.5%
May	43.7%	49.9%	59.7%	44.8%	44.3%
June	38.5%	41.5%	39.8%	50.8%	39.0%
AVERAGE	33.2%	41.1%	45.6%	46.5%	

Acting City Attorney Whetsel stated staff continues to work on the dilapidated housing properties list.

Mayor Graves stated that Council needed to consider the recommendation regarding the business license at 135 E. Railroad Street pursuant to Elberton Code of Ordinances Section 10-43.2(d). Zoning Administrator Mooney provided the following recommendation:

Based on information provided, Council recommends the occupational tax license be suspended for sixty (60) days. During which time the owner of the property must bring the property into compliance with all building and property codes.

Once property is brought to code, Building Inspector Jason Mooney will evaluate the progress and condition of the property during the sixty (60) day suspension to determine if any further action shall be taken.

Once property is brought into compliance, occupational tax license may be issued to Mr. Mielitz.”

Council Member Prince motioned to accept the recommendation as stated above, seconded by Council Member Parham and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Burton, Colquitt, Prince, Parham).

Mayor Graves asked to move into executive session to consult with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the authority or any officer or employee or in which the authority or any officer of employee may be directly involved (O.C.G.A. 50-14-2).

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

Council Member Colquitt motioned to move out of executive session and reconvene the regular meeting, seconded by Council Member Parham, and the motion passed unanimously (Butler, Colquitt, Burton, Parham, Prince).

Mayor Graves stated that no action was taken.

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