

**CITY OF PINE LAKE
WORK SESSION
MINUTES
May 12, 2026 at 6:00PM
Courthouse & Council Chambers
459 Pine Drive, Pine Lake, GA 30072**

Call to Order: Mayor pro tem Goldberg called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Present: Mayor pro tempore Jeff Goldberg, and Council Members Deborah Hull, Stephanie Kohler, Jane Lowers, and Thomas Torrent. Also present were City Manager Stanley Hawthorne, City Attorney Chris Balch, Chief of Police Sarai Y'Hudah-Green, Finance Director Stephen Mayer, and City Clerk Ned Dagenhard. Public Works Director Bernard Kendrick was not in attendance.

Announcements/Communications

Council Member Kohler expressed thanks to resident-Diane Durrett, as well as members of the municipal arts panel (MAP) and Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors (PLAIN) for their organizing efforts regarding the recent *Pollination Celebration*. Ms. Kohler added that they and resident Courtney Wasserburger had also walked the City's commercial district, and spoke of businesses Amicia's, Silver's, and Stone Mountain Pawn.

Mayor pro tem Goldberg announced that he and Council Member Torrent would be attending the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) *Small Cities Conference* the following day through Friday (5/15).

Adoption of the Agenda of the Day

Council Member Kohler motioned to adopt the agenda; Council Member Lowers seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor pro tem Goldberg called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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New Business

1. Mural and Art Wall, Project Discussion

Mayor pro tem Goldberg invited resident Melanie Hammett to discuss the history of the public art installations project. Ms. Hammett mentioned that costs have likely now inflated—per a resident with experience in public art/mural installation—estimating a 50-100% increase.

Council Member Lowers inquired as to whether one project should be prioritized over the other, given cost increases, as well as maintenance expectation. Ms. Hammett responded that she hoped the City would find available funds to supplement the increased cost. To the latter query, Ms. Hammett stated that the design proposal aims to reduce the need for regular maintenance.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Hammett, the City Attorney, and City Council regarding curation of art items for the 425 Spring Drive proposed installation (“*Gateway Gallery*”), the value of a visual introduction to the community for residents and visitors, and collaboration with the Rockbridge Road business leaders.

No action was taken by City Council.

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2. Property Taxes: Digest, Calculator – Process and Schedule

City Manager Hawthorne presented a section from the *May 2026 Strategic Performance Report*, and fielded questions from the City Council regarding a potential increase to the City’s millage rate, sales tax collections, and the potential impact of Senate Bill (SB) 33.

Members of City Council discussed managing short- and long-term impact on community demography against a potential increase to the City’s millage rate. The City Manager emphasized the value of months of discussion leading into the millage rate adoption cycle, as well as the educational opportunities associated with upcoming public hearings, and the City Council-managed “community chat” events.

Further discussion took place regarding attempts by the State legislature to alter tax avenues available to local governments, such as income and sales taxes.

No action was taken by City Council.

3. Special Assessments, Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs)

Finance Director Mayer presented a section from the *May 2026 Strategic Performance Report*, explaining the City’s stormwater fee assessments, appropriation of funds from the respective stormwater account, and the concept of a tax anticipation note (TAN). City Manager Hawthorne further detailed the purpose of TANs, and discussed historic liquidity and cash flow patterns within the City.

No action was taken by City Council.

4. Anti-Smoking Ordinance

Council Member Lowers introduced the idea of a local anti-smoking ordinance, citing a discussion she had an individual lobbying on behalf of the American Heart Association. A discussion took place regarding the parameters of such an ordinance, possible State and Federal preemption issues, enforcement mechanisms, community impact, and whether such legislation would cover “vaping” products.

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5. Scheduling Summer Town Hall

A brief discussion took place, wherein Mayor pro tem Goldberg expressed the collective will of the body to proceed with a town hall in the near future, alluding to sharing calendars among the City Council with the goal of setting a date during the Summer months.

No action was taken by City Council.

6. DeKalb Soil & Water Conservation Commission – Meeting Update

City Attorney Balch stated that he and Public Works Director Kendrick have reached out to the DeKalb County Soil & Water Commission (DSWCC), as well as the DeKalb County law department to schedule a preliminary meeting. Mr. Balch further characterized the circumstances that led to a proposed meeting by members of the Governing Authority, citing the City's certificate of authority with the State Environmental Protection Division.

A brief discussion took place between Council Member Torrent and the City Attorney regarding prerequisite items associated with any future meetings between the Governing Authority and representatives from the DSWCC.

No action was taken by City Council.

7. Proposed Annexation: Compare/Contrast with Neighboring Jurisdictions

Council Member Lowers introduced the item, with the contextualization that nearby cities proposing annexation plans could impede future annexation attempts by the City of Pine Lake.

City Manager Hawthorne shared his understanding that annexation plans within the County were mainly driven in collaboration with the DeKalb Municipal Association (DMA). City Attorney Balch added that DMA would be the ideal information resource to understand the annexation ambitions of nearby cities, adding that communication with Council Members in those nearby cities may also be advisable.

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8. Fee Schedule: Compare/Contrast with Neighboring Jurisdictions

Council Member Lowers expressed a desire to proceed with an informal collection of fee schedule information from neighboring cities, to gain a comparative understanding of fee assessments.

A discussion took place between members of the Governing Authority, the City Manager, and the City Attorney regarding the merits of a formal study of all revenue sources. Distinction was made by the City Attorney regarding municipal court fines, which he advised is a function of the judiciary rather than the legislature.

No action was taken by City Council.

9. Proposed Amendments to Chapter 2, Article II, Division 2 of the Code of Ordinances – Regarding City Council Meeting Start Time

Council Member Torrent introduced the item, citing community input and guest arrival delays in support of adopting a later start time to City Council meetings.

A discussion took place, wherein members of the Governing Authority and staff presented suggested approaches to certain members of the community being unable to attend meetings at the onset.

A consensus of City Council was observed, regarding the decision to return to this item at the June 9, 2026 Work Session. City Council Members decided among themselves to reach out to neighboring communities to assess a “norm” as it relates to City Council meeting start times.

No action was taken by City Council.

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Reports and Other Business

Council Member Torrent stated that he was excited about the upcoming *Small Cities Conference*.

Council Member Hull asked to revisit the concept of a shared calendar among the City Council, to ensure attendance by one or more members at various community and networking events. This request was supported verbally by Mayor pro tem Goldberg.

Executive Session

Council Member Hull moved to enter Executive Session at 8:43PM.

Potential pending litigation was discussed.

The City Manager recruitment process was discussed.

No action was taken by City Council.

Council Member Torrent moved to re-enter the Work Session at 11:04PM

Adjournment

Council Member Torrent moved to adjourn the Work Session at 11:04PM.

Ned Dagenhard

Ned Dagenhard, City Clerk

