

**CITY OF PINE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
December 2, 2025 at 6:00PM
Courthouse & Council Chambers
459 Pine Drive, Pine Lake, GA 30072**

Call to Order: Mayor Hall called the Special Called Meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Present: Mayor Brandy Hall, Mayor pro tem Jean Bordeaux, Council Members Jeff Goldberg, Tom Ramsey, Thomas Torrent, and Augusta Woods. Also present were City Manager Stanley Hawthorne, City Attorney Chris Balch, Chief of Police Sarai Y'Hudah-Green, Finance Director Paul Salvatore, and Acting City Clerk Ned Dagenhard. Public Works Director Bernard Kendrick was not in attendance.

Announcements and Communications

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux announced a toy drive for Rockbridge Elementary, adding that information would be dispersed via the Ms. Bordeaux's private *Facebook* page, and the City's emailed "News Blast."

Council Member Ramsey added that toys can be dropped off at the Pine Lake Municipal Annex, and during Saturday's (12/6) *Lighting of the Lake and Cookie Exchange*, sponsored by the Pine Lake Association for Involved Neighbors (PLAIN).

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux added that the Pine Lake "Coffee Shop" event would take place Sunday (12/7) from 10:00AM-12:00PM at the Beach House.

Adoption of the Agenda of the Day

Council Member Woods moved to adopt the Agenda of the Day; Council Member Ramsey seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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Old Business

1. Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Proposed Budget – Review

The City Manager narrated each section of the budget document, discussing the table of organization, revenue and expenditure categories, any notable adjustments realized during analysis of prior year expenses (such as an increase in auditor fees and group insurance costs) and the various strategies for revenue diversification discussed by the Governing Authority. City Manager Hawthorne also described an initiative led by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners and DeKalb Municipal Association (DMA), wherein the entire County will be incorporated, requiring presentation of annexation plans from each of the County's thirteen (13) municipalities.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux expressed a sense of encouragement regarding the urgent support of annexation by the County.

Council Member Ramsey echoed Ms. Bordeaux's comments, but also expressed nervousness toward the proposed use of fund balance reserves to balance the 2026 budget.

Council Member Goldberg characterized the use of fund balance reserves as "growing pains," and highlighted the need to educate residents on the aspects of the upcoming budget year. Mr. Goldberg also referenced the franchise fees revenue category, speculating that there may be underenforcement of that requirement among utility providers operating in the City.

Council Member Woods commended the City Manager and staff for development of a "very well done [and] easy to understand" document. Ms. Woods also praised the County's support for municipal annexation, and characterized the current taxation system in the City as "unsustainable."

Council Member Torrent emphasized geographical expansion as imperative for the continued existence of the City. Mr. Torrent also inquired about a debt service item; the City Attorney recommended the topic for executive session.

No action was taken by City Council.

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Public Hearing

Mayor Hall opened the Public Hearing to allow public comment on the 2026 Proposed Budget at 7:04PM.

The Public Hearing took place.

Seeing no further public, Mayor Hall closed the Public Hearing at 7:14PM

New Business

1. Classification and Compensation Study – Presentation

Mayor Hall introduced the topic, recalling the Charter requirement to implement a “classification and compensation plan” for staff. The Mayor added that the lack of such a plan has introduced external and internal equity, and referenced the cost associated with filling vacancies.

Sam Traeger, from the *University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government*, presented the classification and pay study.

Council Member Ramsey inquired as to why the study analyzed a particular district (or “region”) rather than cities by size. Mr. Traeger responded that the study was meant to capture the market cost, adding that Pine Lake is pulling from the same labor market as other DeKalb and Gwinnett County cities used to benchmark data.

Council Member Goldberg added that analyzing Department of Community Affairs salary data for cities with populations comparable to Pine Lake can be misleading, since the cities listed operate in areas with a lower cost of living than the Atlanta metropolitan area. Mr. Goldberg inquired as to where or whether Administrative Coordinator Missye Varner is captured in the study. Mr. Traeger added that any contracted employees—of which Ms. Varner is one—required additional analysis, since their roles include “multiple hats.”

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux expressed a desire to study market data as it relates to benefits, alleging that the City of Pine Lake offers a competitive benefit package. Mr. Traeger responded that while benefits were not included in the study, it is notable that “50-70% of budget spending... ..is what we see in other cities.”

Council Member Goldberg added that improvements had recently been made to

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the City's administrative facilities.

Mayor Hall voiced support for the investment, but added "the question is how do we pay for it," describing the statement as the task at hand, and expressing a desire to avoid "budgetary whiplash" during implementation.

Council Member Torrent inquired as to whether the data presented reflected the entirety of District 3, or the twelve (12) cities selected for benchmark data. Mr. Traeger affirmed the latter. Mr. Torrent then contested that the geographical size of the City impacts the demand of certain roles, specifically that of the Public Works Department.

Council Member Torrent asked whether classification and title changes would require additional salary adjustments. City Manager Hawthorne stated that titles, roles, and salary adjustments would all be captured in the proposed implementation plan.

No action was taken by City Council.

2. Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority – Presentation

City Attorney Balch introduced James Elliot, esq. Mr. Elliot then presented a power point presentation on development authorities and downtown development authorities.

Mr. Elliot fielded questions from the Governing Authority, which focused on topics such as board director requirements and designation of "downtown" and "urban redevelopment" areas, as well as the level of authority established within a development authority, and the ability of the City Council to manage goals.

No action was taken by City Council.

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Reports and Other Business

Mayor

Mayor Hall thanked staff and guests for the evening's presentations, adding that the Governing Authority has "a lot of big decisions" ahead. The Mayor also thanked Council Members-elect for being present in the audience, stating it will help them to "hit the ground running."

City Council

Council Member Goldberg announced that Tuesday (12/9) he would be attending a workshop with the Georgia Academy of Economic Development.

Council Member Torrent announced that he and Council Member Woods would be attending a DeKalb County Visitors Bureau luncheon on Thursday (12/4).

Executive Session

- **City Manager's Contract**

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux moved to enter Executive Session at 8:27PM; Council Member Torrent seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

An Executive Session took place, for the purposes of discussing the City Manager's contract.

Council Member Torrent moved to re-enter the Special Called Meeting at 9:13PM; Council Member Ramsey seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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Adjournment

Council Member Goldberg moved to adjourn the Special Called Meeting at 9:15PM.

Ned Dagenhard

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Acting City Clerk