

**CITY OF PINE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
December 9, 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 Bordeaux, Council Members Jeff Goldberg, Tom Ramsey, and Thomas Torrent. Also present were City Manager Stanley Hawthorne, City Attorney Chris Balch, Chief of Police Sarai Y'Hudah-Green, Public Works Director Bernard Kendrick, and Acting City Clerk Ned Dagenhard. Council Member Augusta Woods and Finance Director Paul Salvatore were not in attendance.

Announcements/Communications

Mayor Hall thanked members of the Pine Lake Association for Involved Neighbors (PLAIN) for their sponsoring of the annual "cookie exchange," in concurrence with the "lighting of the lake" holiday event.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux announced that the toy drive benefitting Rockbridge Elementary was doing "very well," and lauded attendance at the Pine Lake "coffeehouse" event.

Adoption of the Agenda of the Day

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux moved to adopt the Agenda of the Day; Council Member Torrent seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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Adoption of the Minutes

- **October 28, 2025 – Regular Meeting**
- **November 12, 2025 – Special Called Meeting**
- **December 2, 2025 – Special Called Meeting**

Council Member Ramsey moved to adopt the Minutes; Council Member Goldberg seconded.

No discussion took place.

Mayor Hall called for a vote to approve the Minutes.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

Old Business

1. Resolution R-2025-67, Position Classification and Pay Plan – Adoption

Council Member Torrent moved to adopt Resolution R-2025-67; Council Member Goldberg seconded.

City Manager Hawthorne recapitulated the presentation by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Council Member Torrent inquired about the sample from which data was collected, as well as the alleged “35 hour work week.” City Manager Hawthorne responded that, outside of hourly and/or part-time employees, no employees within the City observe a standard work week, regularly performing duties outside of the standard work day, citing recent projects completed during weekends and holidays, and the presence of (4) employees at after-hours meetings.

Council Member Torrent stated that he felt the assessment of employee pay as “dire” was inaccurate, citing the salary of the City Clerk of Mountain Park and work-from-home capabilities. City Manager Hawthorne responded that the City chose the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to perform the study based on their reputation for scientific studies. Mr. Hawthorne then cited an instance wherein the City attempted to hire for a vacancy in the Finance Department, being met with the lowest negotiated salary expectation of \$90,000.

Mayor Hall interjected that the decision required scrutiny, echoing the City

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Manager's characterization of the alleged 35-hour work week as inaccurate. Mayor Hall then stated, drawing on private sector experience, that human resources professionals have advised that work-from-home capabilities "favors employers because of increased efficiency." The Mayor continued with additional comments of support for the item, including a reflection of a near 3-year vacancy in the Public Works Supervisor position (*replaced by the expanded Public Works Director position in February 2025*).

Mayor Hall asked the City Manager to explain why the Court Clerk position was moved from tier 16 to tier 20. City Manager Hawthorne described that, unlike in other municipal court departments where the Chief Judge fulfills a higher-graded administrative role, Pine Lake Municipal Court is managed entirely by the Court Clerk. The City Manager added that the recommendation for changing the title of Court Clerk to Court Administrator is also based on this assessment.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux asked for clarification on the cost and approval of the pay scale table. Mayor Hall responded that in addition to the \$99,000 "option 2," \$32,000 would be needed to bring all employees to the minimum recommended pay scale based on a scientific study and classification of roles. City Manager Hawthorne further characterized that City Council's action—should it choose to act—would be to adopt the pay scale. It was the City Manager's purview, however, to determine application of that pay scale within the confines of the administrative centers of the budget adopted by the City Council.

Additional questions were fielded related to whether the benefit package offered by Pine Lake is relatively competitive.

Council Member Goldberg characterized his feeling as "sticker shock," and inquired whether the \$125,000 "placeholder" approved in April of 2025 would be rolled over into the \$130,000 cost of implementing the pay and classification plan. The City Manager responded in the affirmative.

Council Member Ramsey expressed concern regarding financial sustainability vis-à-vis use of fund balance reserves.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux, and Council Members Goldberg and Torrent voted in favor of the motion; Council Member Ramsey voted against; Council Member Woods was not present. The motion carried.

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2. Resolution R-2025-68, Appointment of City Clerk

Council Member Goldberg motioned to adopt Resolution R-2025-68; Council Member Ramsey seconded.

A brief discussion took place, during which members of the Governing Authority expressed support for the item.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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3. Resolution R-2025-69, City Manager Contract

Council Member Torrent motioned to adopt Resolution R-2025-69; Council Member Goldberg seconded.

Council Member Ramsey inquired about the City Manager salary being between the midpoint and maximum for tier 26 in the pay plan adopted within R-2025-67. Mr. Ramsey also inquired about the City Manager's choice to not relocate to Georgia. City Manager Hawthorne responded that his proposed salary reflects more than 30 years of experience in City Management, within the relative confines of Pine Lake's practical financial circumstances. Mr. Hawthorne added that while he understood the drawback of not being nearby, his previous relocation reimbursement was \$32,000, and expressed the opinion that regular interstate was more practical.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux echoed comments made by Council Member Ramsey. Ms. Bordeaux added that while concerned, she could see "as a City Manager, you're [enthusiastic] and caring about Pine Lake." City Manager Hawthorne mused that "in 30+ years... ...this is the happiest I've been in a job in my career."

Council Member Goldberg added that "perception is [residents'] reality," and asked that the City Manager ideate on providing similar communications expressed to City Council to the community at large.

Mayor Hall highlighted the systemic impact City Manager Hawthorne has implemented since January 2025, characterizing them as "palpable," adding that the organization is "humming." Mayor Hall also referred to the passage of various financial policies, regarding them as a "call to action" in terms of improving long-term economic sustainability.

Council Members Torrent, Goldberg, and Ramsey inquired about the removal of in-office minimum language in the contract, which City Manager Hawthorne described as not cost effective, but added that he "does not intend to be in Pine Lake [less]" and will make an effort to attend community events more regularly.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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4. Resolution R-2025-70, Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget – Adoption

Council Member Torrent motioned to adopt Resolution R-2025-70; Mayor pro tem Bordeaux seconded.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux inquired about changes in the stormwater administrative center, which was described as removal of a personal services supplementation for Public Works. Ms. Bordeaux also inquired about the \$50,000 code enforcement appropriation from April of 2025, which the City Manager stated had been applied to lessen impact on the fund balance reserve.

Council Member Ramsey reiterated concern about the potential for prolonged deficit spending, requesting a plan in the event that revenue is not supplemented by annexation and economic development efforts. City Manager Hawthorne agreed with the assessment and supported the action item.

Council Member Torrent inquired about implementing a mid-calendar budget cycle; City Manager Hawthorne stated that the subject was among ongoing discussion items between his office and the Finance Department.

Mayor Hall called for a vote.

All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

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Reports and Other Business

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux—in light of the evening being her final City Council meeting—reflected in general terms on her tenure as a Council Member, addressing the incoming members, “you guys have a lot to look forward to, such an interesting thing to do. I think you’ll love it.”

Council Member Goldberg thanked Mayor pro tem Bordeaux and Council Members Ramsey and Woods for their service. Mr. Goldberg also announced his attendance at an economic development training session, and expressed that neighboring communities are experiencing similar circumstances, and wished attendees a happy holiday season.

Council Member Ramsey regarded his tenure as “most great,” citing “a few exceptions.” Mr. Ramsey added, “it has been my pleasure to serve,” and extended an offer of continued help to remaining members.

Council Member Torrent inquired about additional cutting along the lake’s berm near Lakeshore Drive. Public Works Director Kendrick stated that the contractor did indeed go beyond the described scope, and offered that previously-planned installation of appropriate shallow-rooted vegetation would extend to those areas, as well.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux and Council Member Ramsey inquired about holiday lighting at the lake, expressing concern over lighting size and location. Director Kendrick offered solutions, including moving the illuminated Pine Lake logo to the Beach House, and conferring with residents regarding holiday lighting layout for 2026.

Council Member Goldberg announced that he, Director Kendrick, and members of the Stewards of Environmental Education and Design (SEED) would be meeting with a representative from Georgia Forestry to discuss invasive plant management.

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Adjournment

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux motioned to adjourn the Special Called Meeting at 8:20PM.

Ned Dagenhard

Ned Dagenhard
Acting City Clerk

