

CITY OF BROOKLET
104 CHURCH ST. BROOKLET, GA 30415 PHONE (912) 842-2137 FAX (912)842-5877

August 21, 2025

**Public Hearing
6:30 PM
&
City Council
Meeting
7:00 PM**

Minutes

Members Present: Mayor L.W. "Nicky" Gwinnett, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem Keith Roughton, City Manager Paul Dyal, Councilman Brad Anderson, Councilwoman Rebecca Kelly, Councilwoman Sheila Wentz, Councilman James Harrison, City Attorney Ben Perkins, and Brooklet City Clerk Lori Phillips.

Members Absent: Assistant City Clerk Melissa Pevey

A. Call to order and welcome - Mayor L.W. "Nicky" Gwinnett, Jr.

B. Invocation

C. Pledge of Allegiance

**D. Approval of Agenda
Motion To Approve**

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

Second: Sheila Wentz

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None
The motion carried 5-0

E. Public Hearing(s)

- 1. Nicholas Newkirk has applied to obtain a license to sell alcoholic beverages in the City of Brooklet. The license being sought is a Combined Pouring License (beer and wine). The alcohol license will be issued under the name Nicholas Gregory Newkirk/Little Nicky's Pizzeria, Inc. The premises are located at 17705 Highway 80 East, Brooklet, Georgia.**

- **Discussion from Mayor & City Council**

The public hearing opened with no comments on an alcohol license application submitted by Nicholas Newkirk for Little Nicky's Pizzeria at 17705 Highway 80 East. Though Newkirk was absent, council members said they were supportive and looked forward to the restaurant's opening.

- **Public Discussion**

No public discussion.

- 2. Planning and Zoning Recommendation for the Subdivision Amenity Ordinance No. 2025-026: An ordinance by the mayor and city council for the city of Brooklet amending Article V of the zoning ordinance of Brooklet, Georgia (Appendix B of the Code of Brooklet, Georgia) to establish a lot size and width reduction program for single-family detached residences in R-3 residential subdivisions.**

- **Discussion from Mayor and Council**

A second hearing item, the Subdivision Amenity Ordinance, was reviewed without public discussion; Councilwoman Rebecca Kelly noted it had already been discussed previously.

- **Public Discussion**

No public discussion.

- 3. Approval of a Motion to Close the Public Hearing Session and Open the City Council Meeting.**

Motion To Approve

Motion: James Harrison

Second: Rebecca Kelly

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

F. Public Participation- Persons Wishing to Address Council

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the City of Brooklet City meetings. The City of Brooklet encourages civility in public disclosure and requests that speakers direct their comments to the Chair. Those attendees wishing to share a document and or comments in writing for inclusion into the public record must email the item to lori.phillips@brookletga.us no later than noon on the day of the meeting.

1. Ellen Perkins – Brooklet Community Development Association (BCDA) Brooklet Peanut Festival September 20, 2025

Ellen Perkins, Brooklet Community Development Association (BCDA) – Brooklet Peanut Festival, September 20, 2025. Perkins, serving as one of the committee members for the annual Brooklet Peanut Festival, addressed the council to confirm arrangements for the upcoming event scheduled for Saturday, September 20. She asked if the festival could proceed with its “usual deal,” meaning use of the traditional downtown site and the same layout as in prior years. Perkins also noted that the BCDA would once again list Brooklet City Hall as an official sponsor of the festival. In addition, Perkins shared that the BCDA is planning a Saturday morning community cleanup ahead of the event. She said she expected to have a firm answer by Friday evening on the specific date and details and would report back promptly. Mayor Gwinnett assured her that once the cleanup date was confirmed, the city would post the information on its website and invite volunteers from the community to participate.

The brief exchange highlighted the city’s continued partnership with the BCDA in hosting one of Brooklet’s most prominent and most visible annual events, which brings in residents and visitors from across Bulloch County and surrounding areas. Council members expressed appreciation for the festival committee’s work and emphasized the importance of ensuring the city is clean and welcoming for attendees.

G. Approval of Minutes

1. July 9, 2025 Special Called Meeting
2. July 17, 2025 City Council Meeting
3. July 28, 2025 Called Meeting

Motion To Approve

Motion: James Harrison

Second: Rebecca Kelly

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

H. Approval of the July Financial Reports**Motion To Approve**

Motion: Keith Roughton

Second: Sheila Wentz

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0**I. Comments by:**

Interim City Manager Carter Crawford was not present but recently submitted an exit report to Brooklet leaders outlining the city's progress, ongoing challenges, and recommendations for the future. Crawford praised Brooklet's strong community spirit, its location for future growth, and the council's unity in adopting a professional council-manager form of government. He noted that the city has access to capable legal and engineering support, reliable intergovernmental partnerships, and steady funding sources from SPLOST and TSPLOST, which can help move projects forward. At the same time, the report highlighted several weaknesses that must be addressed. Among them are a shortage of staff to handle services, limited funds for long-term water system expansion, and a lack of training for both employees and elected officials. Crawford also warned that Brooklet has not kept up with needed public works maintenance and repairs, and that traffic pressures and rapid growth are likely to increase the strain on services. One of the most pressing concerns identified was the city's water system. Crawford pointed out that defective meters at Southeast Bulloch High and Middle Schools alone have resulted in more than \$38,000 lost revenue in recent years, with other leaks and faulty meters across the city further compounding the losses. These problems come at a time when Brooklet will depend on substantial water revenues to cover debt payments tied to water system expansion. He urged city leaders to prioritize repairs, install new meters promptly, and ensure leaks are fixed on time. Crawford also emphasized the importance of hiring additional personnel. The police department, he said, needs at least two more officers to provide 24/7 coverage. In contrast, the public works department requires four more employees to maintain streets, drainage, and sewer systems properly. He recommended contracting out garbage collection so that staff can focus on essential infrastructure work. He further warned that the city's failure to repair more than a dozen faulty fire hydrants identified in 2024 exposes Brooklet to potential liability and puts public safety at risk. On finances, Crawford encouraged Brooklet to make better use of the Georgia One Fund to earn higher interest on idle revenue and to prepare "shovel-ready" projects in advance of grant opportunities. He also suggested seeking new revenue sources and reducing audit findings to strengthen financial stability. Looking to the future, the report called on the city to maintain its strong relationship with Bulloch County and other municipalities, while also building stronger ties with state and federal leaders. Crawford advised against purchasing or renovating the deteriorated old school behind City Hall, instead recommending that Brooklet expand its existing City Hall facilities when the time comes. Despite these concerns, Crawford ended his report on a hopeful note. He described Brooklet as a city with a positive future, provided it takes steps to address water system losses, expands staffing, manages growth responsibly, and remains proactive in pursuing grants and funding opportunities.

City Manager Paul Dyal, attending one of his first regular meetings as Brooklet's new city manager, introduced himself more fully to the council and community. He said he was excited to be in Brooklet and looked forward to getting out into the community to meet residents directly. Dyal explained that one of his priorities will be reviewing the city's charter and bringing it before the council soon, to adjust and introduce new ideas to strengthen Brooklet's government operations. He emphasized that his focus is on making Brooklet "the best city it can be" and assured both council and residents that he is open to phone calls, questions, and suggestions. Dyal closed his comments by thanking the council for the opportunity to serve and encouraging ongoing communication as the city continues to grow.

City Attorney Ben Perkins raised a scheduling concern regarding the start time of the evening's public hearing, noting that some council members and staff had missed the 6:30 p.m. notice and arrived closer to 7:00 p.m. He suggested that future public hearings be held at 7:00 p.m., immediately before the regular council session, to avoid confusion and ensure consistent attendance. The council agreed with the recommendation, with members noting they believed the city had followed that practice in the past and that returning to it would help streamline meetings for both officials and the public.

City Engineer Wesley Parker gave a brief update, starting with the Live Station project. He reported that electrical work is now complete and that GDOT has approved the water project. The next phase will involve work on Depot Street, where sewer crews will begin construction. Parker noted that someone from the city should reach out to nearby business owners in advance, since access to their road will be disrupted during the process. Mayor Gwinnett suggested holding a meeting with the affected businesses to explain the timeline and impact. He also asked whether the city was still considering making Depot Street a one-way, but Parker said that option is no longer under consideration. Gwinnett recommended that traffic flow be directed toward the bank if future changes are discussed, and Parker agreed that a dedicated meeting may be needed before any decision is finalized. Parker also mentioned the pending GEMA project but said there has been little recent communication about funding.

City Clerk Lori Phillips reported that this fall's municipal election will be uncontested, with incumbents Sheila Wentz and Rebecca Kelly requalifying for their seats. Phillip Oliver will replace James Harrison, who did not seek re-election.

Assistant City Clerk Melissa Pevey - Absent

Chief of Police Lennie Reolegio presented the department's monthly activity report, noting that overall crime levels remained low and consistent with prior months.

- **Part One Crimes:** No serious offenses were reported in July. This compares to one property crime incident the previous month, reflecting a stable trend in major criminal activity.

- **Part Two Crimes:** The department logged 25 incidents, including two thefts, one disorderly conduct case, one fraud report, one domestic violence case, and five vandalism or trespass complaints. Officers also responded to 10 agency assist calls and six traffic/public service details. Reolegio emphasized that while none of these offenses were severe, they represent ongoing quality-of-life and enforcement issues that the department monitors closely.
- **Traffic and Enforcement:** Officers investigated three traffic accidents, up slightly from two in June. They issued 66 citations, an increase from 47 the previous month, and collected \$14,114 in fines.
- **Calls for Service:** The department handled 27 calls for service in July, nearly identical to June's 28. Officer-initiated activity saw a sharp increase, rising from 47 to 144, which Reolegio attributed to stepped-up patrols and proactive enforcement.

Reolegio told council members the department remains focused on maintaining high visibility in the community and continuing to address traffic safety, property damage complaints, and other recurring concerns.

J. Comments by Council Members:

Councilmember Sheila Wentz did not present comments.

Councilmember Brad Anderson did not present comments.

Councilmember James Harrison did not present comments.

Councilmember Rebecca Kelly did not present comments.

Mayor Pro-Tem Keith Roughton opened his comments by offering a "shout out" to Lindsay and the Wayne Street crew, noting their responsiveness and hard work in addressing concerns raised by residents. He said the team had gone "above and beyond" to restore areas quickly and live up to commitments made in earlier meetings, adding that he and others in the community appreciated their dedication. Roughton then shifted to the Brooklet Recreation Park, confirming that renovations had begun. He highlighted that the project would include the addition of six new pickleball courts, giving Brooklet and Eastern Bulloch County a dedicated space for the fast-growing sport. Roughton said he has already been approached by residents eager to see the courts completed, underscoring the community's interest and excitement.

Mayor L.W. "Nicky" Gwinnett said he would like to see work on updating the city's charter begin soon, noting the possibility that it may need to be taken to the legislature. He emphasized the importance of starting the process early, so there is sufficient time to prepare for the next legislative session if changes are required.

K. Ordinances:**1. First Reading of Ordinance No. 2025-029:**

An ordinance by the mayor and city council for the City of Brooklet, Georgia, of an ordinance to regulate soliciting and door-to-door sales.

Ordinance 2025-029, creating new rules for solicitation and door-to-door sales. The measure is designed to regulate for-profit solicitors while protecting residents' privacy and safety. Under the ordinance, anyone who wishes to solicit door-to-door for commercial purposes—such as selling goods, services, or subscriptions—must first apply for a permit through the City Clerk's office. Permits require a background check, a detailed application, and a non-refundable fee of \$75 for six months. Each solicitor must always carry their permit while working, and licenses can be suspended or revoked for violations. Nonprofit, charitable, and political groups are exempt from the permit requirement. The ordinance also sets clear restrictions. Soliciting is not allowed at homes that display a "No Soliciting" sign, and solicitors must immediately leave if a resident asks them to go. Door-to-door solicitation is limited to the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Fraud, misrepresentation, or dishonest practices are prohibited, and violations can result in penalties under the city code. Brooklet officials said the ordinance helps balance the right to conduct business with residents' right to privacy. It also provides the city with a means to track solicitors, ensure accountability, and prevent abuse.

2. First Reading of Ordinance No. 2025-030: An Ordinance by the Mayor and City Council for the City of Brooklet to repeal Ordinance No. 2025-027, which amended the compensation of the Mayor and City Council.

Council opened the first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-030, which proposes repealing Ordinance No. 2025-027. The prior ordinance had addressed compensation for Brooklet's mayor and city council members. Still, its adoption was met with concerns about timing, clarity, and the process by which it was enacted. During the discussion, Perkins explained that repealing the earlier ordinance would effectively reset compensation back to its prior structure, allowing the council to revisit the matter more carefully if they wish to adjust in the future. He emphasized that the repeal was the cleanest legal way to correct any procedural issues while keeping the record transparent. Several council members agreed, noting that they wanted to avoid any appearance of impropriety or confusion surrounding their pay structure. By placing the repeal into ordinance form, the city ensures the issue is handled formally and remains open for reconsideration later under proper procedures.

As this was the first reading, no vote was taken. The item will be returned at a subsequent meeting for second reading and possible adoption.

3. Second Reading and Consideration of a Motion to Approve the Subdivision Amenity Ordinance No. 2025-026: An ordinance by the mayor and city council for the city of Brooklet amending Article V of the zoning ordinance of Brooklet, Georgia (Appendix B of the Code of Brooklet, Georgia) to establish a lot size and width reduction program for single-family detached residences in R-3 residential subdivisions.**Motion To Approve**

Motion: Brad Anderson

Second: Rebecca Kelly

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

4. **Second Reading and Consideration of a Motion to Approve Ordinance No. 2025-028: An ordinance by the mayor and city council for the City of Brooklet amending articles I, III, and VI of the subdivision ordinances of Brooklet, Georgia (Appendix A of the Code of Brooklet, Georgia) to establish provisions requiring owners' associations for certain residential and nonresidential developments.**

Motion To Approve

Motion: Brad Anderson

Second: Rebecca Kelly

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

L. Discussion Item(s):

1. **Consideration of a Motion to Approve the Application for an Alcohol License following the City of Brooklet Alcohol Ordinance Sec. 6-33 for Nicholas Gregory Newkirk/Little Nicky's Pizzeria, Inc. at 17705 Highway 80 East, Brooklet, Georgia.**

Motion To Approve

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

Second: James Harrison

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 4-0

Councilman Brad Anderson asked to be recused from the vote, citing a property-related conflict of interest connected to the proposed restaurant site.

2. **Discussion and Consideration of a Motion to Approve the City FY 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – presented by Wesley Parker, City Engineer with Parker Engineering, LLC, and Carter Crawford, HC Crawford Consulting, Inc.**

The City of Brooklet has released its draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for fiscal years 2026 through 2030, laying out a five-year roadmap for significant projects, infrastructure upgrades, and equipment purchases. The plan focuses on projects costing more than \$20,000 with a useful life of at least three years, ensuring that city funds are spent on high-priority needs without overburdening taxpayers. The CIP serves as a tool to implement Brooklet's Comprehensive Plan by linking long-term goals to physical improvements. It provides a schedule for upcoming projects, estimates costs, identifies funding sources, and allows both council members and residents to evaluate short- and long-term needs each year. The plan will be updated annually to reflect changes in priorities, emergencies,

or cost fluctuations, as well as new demands from Brooklet's growing population. Funding for CIP projects is expected to come from a mix of city operating funds, SPLOST and T-SPLOST revenues, DOT's LMIG program, state and federal grants and loans, and bonds when necessary. The town set guidelines for responsible debt use, noting that debt service should not exceed 15% of total expenditures and that voter approval would be required before issuing general obligation bonds. Among the identified projects, the plan estimates about \$2.1 million for water system projects and \$420,000 for street and drainage improvements. Each project is assigned an identification number for easy tracking, showing the department, project year, and sequence. City leaders emphasized that the CIP is not just a budget document but a strategy to manage growth and maintain essential services. By updating it annually, Brooklet can remain flexible while maintaining a focus on critical investments in water, roads, and public facilities.

Motion To Approve

Motion: James Harrison

Second: Rebecca Kelly

Ayes: Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

3. Discussion and Consideration of a Motion to Approve the Appointment of the Absentee Ballot Clerk to Lori Phillips for the November 4, 2025, Municipal Election.

The council considered a motion to appoint Phillips as absentee ballot clerk for the November 4 municipal election. However, no member made a motion to move the item forward, and it was declared "dead" without action.

Discussion clarified that because all qualifying candidates were unopposed, Brooklet will not hold a municipal election this year. Since no election is required, the appointment of an absentee ballot clerk became unnecessary. Officials agreed the matter did not need to be returned to the agenda.

4. Discussion and Consideration of a Motion to Approve the Purchase from Hayes Chrys Dodge Jeep of Baldwin for a 2024 Dodge Truck Durango for the Brooklet Police Department for \$45,924.95 to be paid from SPLOST Funds.

The proposed purchase of a 2024 Dodge Durango patrol vehicle for the Brooklet Police Department was brought forward but failed due to a lack of a second. Kelly objected to the way the matter was presented, explaining that the vehicle had already been purchased without prior discussion by the council. She stressed that while she recognized the need for a new police vehicle, she could not support a motion after the fact, calling the process "wrong" and inconsistent with the city's policies. Kelly said she was unsure where the town stood legally on the matter, but emphasized her concern about the lack of transparency. It was noted that the purchase had been included in the city's approved budget, meaning

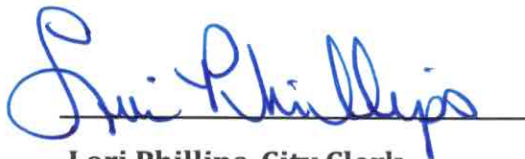
funds had already been allocated. Gwinnett, who had been out of town at the time of the purchase, clarified that he was not involved in the decision. Harrison then questioned why a motion was necessary if the car had already been bought, pointing out that the money was available and within budget. The discussion ended with council members agreeing that the issue was not about overspending but about following standard procedures, which they said had not been done in this case.

M. Adjournment**Motion To Approve****Motion:** James Harrison**Second:** Rebecca Kelly**Ayes:** Keith Roughton, Brad Anderson, Sheila Wentz, James Harrison, and Rebecca Kelly**Nays:** None**The motion carried 5-0**

Approved this 18th day of September, 2025.



L.W. (Nicky) Gwinnett, Jr., Mayor



Lori Phillips, City Clerk

