



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

December 18, 2025

**City Council
Meeting
7:00 PM**

Minutes

Members Present: Mayor L.W. "Nicky" Gwinnett, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem Hubert K. Roughton, Councilman James Harrison, Councilman Brad Anderson, Councilwoman Rebecca Kelly, Councilwoman Sheila Wentz, Interim City Manager Lori Phillips, and Interim Chief of Police Sergeant Nickki Garman.

Members Absent: Planning & Zoning/Assistant City Clerk Melissa Petitt

Pre-Meeting Ceremony

A Farewell Ceremony and Presentation honoring Councilman James Harrison will be held at 6:45 PM, immediately before the start of the regular City Council meeting.

The Brooklet City Council opened its December 18 meeting by recognizing James "Jimmy" Harrison, who is concluding four years of service on the council. Prior to the start of the regular meeting, council members and city staff held a brief farewell ceremony to thank Harrison for his contributions during a period marked by major infrastructure planning and growth pressures for the city.

Harrison was presented with a commemorative plaque featuring a photograph from the groundbreaking of Brooklet's sewer system, a project that advanced during his tenure and represents one of the city's most significant long-term infrastructure investments. Council members and staff expressed appreciation for Harrison's time on the council, noting his involvement in key discussions surrounding utilities, development, and city operations.

In brief remarks, Harrison thanked the city for the opportunity to serve and noted that he remains a Brooklet resident, adding that “you might see me again” as he steps away from the council. His departure marks a leadership transition as the city moves into the new year, with Phillip H. Oliver (Coach Oliver) set to assume the vacant council seat.

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

B. Invocation – Councilwoman Rebecca Kelly

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

Second: Brad Anderson

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

E. 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. Joseph Grooms, a resident of the City of Brooklet, addressed concerns regarding county development near city limits, including water access, zoning authority, and lack of coordination with city officials. The speaker emphasized the need for unified council action and equitable treatment of city residents.

He also mentioned that concerns were raised regarding public safety coverage, particularly the need for enhanced police presence and 24/7 service. The speaker urged council unity and collaboration to better serve residents.

2. Bobby Durden – Blue Knights GA 11

Bobby Durden was not present for the meeting. Therefore, Stan York, Director and Chief Representative of the Blue Knights International (Georgia Chapter), presented information about the organization, highlighting its charitable contributions (approximately \$14,000 in local donations in the past year).

The group requested renewal of its lease for the Scout Hut at 100 Park Avenue South. Council expressed appreciation for the organization’s community service.

3. Dave Bircher, a resident of Brooklet, addressed the council with a question regarding the status of a pothole repair on his road and asked for an update from city staff.

F. Approval of Minutes

1. November 13, 2025 Work Session
2. November 20, 2025 City Council Meeting

Motion to Approve

Motion: James Harriossn

Second: Keith Roughton

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

G. Approval of the November Financial Reports

Motion to Approve

Motion: James Harriossn

Second: Keith Roughton

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

H. Comments by:

- Interim City Manager / City Clerk Lori Phillips**

Interim City Manager Lori Phillips told council that Brooklet is preparing to go live with its AMI water meter reading software, which was approved several months ago. Once activated, the system will allow residents to create online accounts, monitor daily water usage, and quickly identify potential leaks by viewing usage start and end dates. Phillips said the city expects to begin using the system within the next month. Phillips also reported that the city received its first SPLOST distribution for the 2026 cycle, totaling around \$564,000.

In addition, Phillips said the Sumter Group, the firm assisting with Brooklet's city manager search, is preparing to send the council a brochure outlining the proposed hiring process, including advertising and selection steps. Once approved, the city will be able to formally begin the search for a permanent city manager.

- City Attorney Ben Perkins**

No Reports

- City Engineer Wesley Parker**

City Engineer Wesley Parker provided the council with updates on several ongoing and upcoming infrastructure projects across Brooklet. Parker reported that the sewer lift station project has been completed, and work on the sewer from Forest Main to Statesboro is nearing completion, with only a short section remaining. He also said the city recently held a pre-construction meeting for a major water project, with construction on a 12-inch water line along Highway 80 between Joiner Street

and Cromley Road expected to begin the first week of January. Parker cautioned that the project would require road closures at times and urged residents, particularly those who use the route for school traffic, to plan for delays. Parker also discussed a recent issue involving utility work encroaching on planned fiber-optic and stormwater infrastructure, which was corrected after city staff identified the conflict and had the line relocated. He said the incident underscored the need for formal permitting and coordination process for utilities working within the city's right-of-way. Parker said he plans to ask the council to place the issue on a future agenda to establish clearer guidelines and safeguards. In addition, Parker updated the council on the city's efforts to secure outside funding. He said Brooklet has advanced to the second round of consideration for a Department of Community Affairs grant tied to the Lee Street culvert project, with a final decision expected in January. Parker also said staff is evaluating a potential gravity sewer grant connected to post-storm funding, which could help move properties from septic systems to sewer service. He noted the tight application deadline of December 31 and said staff is weighing whether to pursue the grant, given timing and project sequencing considerations.

- **Planning & Zoning/Assistant City Clerk Melissa Petitt**
Absent

- **Interim Chief of Police, Sergeant Nickki Garmen**

Interim Police Chief Nickki Garmen provided the council with an overview of the Brooklet Police Department's current equipment needs, outlining several upcoming expenses tied to officer safety, technology, and compliance requirements.

Garmen said the department's radar and LIDAR units are approaching the end of their certification life and may no longer be eligible for recertification in 2026, which would limit traffic enforcement capabilities. She also discussed the need to replace outdated radios and body-worn cameras, noting that some current models are no longer supported by manufacturers, making repairs and replacements difficult. Garmen presented cost estimates for multiple equipment options, including radios, body cameras, and tasers, emphasizing that the department currently lacks a non-lethal option. She said the projected costs are high but necessary to keep the department on par with regional agencies and ensure officer safety as the city grows. Garmen added that the department is also evaluating long-term options such as fleet management programs used by neighboring agencies. To help offset the cost of future equipment purchases, Garmen discussed the possibility of establishing a 501(c)(3) police foundation, which would allow citizens and businesses to make tax-deductible donations directly supporting the police department.

Following Garmen's report, Stan York addressed the council to share his experience serving on a similar police foundation board in Statesboro. York explained that police foundations can be an effective way to fund equipment and support officers when municipal budgets fall short, citing examples such as purchasing protective gear, supporting K-9 units, and assisting officers and their families during emergencies. He said the foundation model allows donations to be directed specifically toward public safety needs and can provide financial relief for cities

facing rising infrastructure and equipment costs. York encouraged the council to consider the foundation approach as Brooklet plans for future growth and public safety demands, noting that community and business participation can play a meaningful role in supporting local law enforcement.

- **Safety Coordinator Johnny Alamia**

Safety Coordinator Johnny Alamia reminded council and city employees that colder temperatures increase the risk of cold-related workplace injuries, particularly for outdoor workers. Alamia warned that exposure to cold can lead to frostbite, hypothermia, and cold stress, all of which can be serious or fatal if left untreated. He encouraged employees to monitor wind chill conditions, recognize symptoms such as numbness, tingling, swelling, leg cramps, and skin discoloration, and take precautions both on the job and at home. He advised workers to dress in layers, wear insulated gloves and boots, cover their heads, and keep clothing dry, noting that moisture can significantly increase heat loss. Alamia also stressed the importance of taking frequent breaks in warm, dry areas and staying hydrated during cold weather. Alamia noted that temperatures had dropped significantly in recent days and closed by wishing the council and staff a happy new year.

I. Comments by Council Members:

- Councilmember Sheila Wentz
- Councilmember Brad Anderson
- Councilmember James Harrison
- Councilmember Rebecca Kelly
- Mayor Pro-Tem Keith Roughton
- Mayor L.W. "Nicky" Gwinnett

During council member comments, members of the Brooklet City Council took time to offer farewell remarks to Councilmember James Harrison, recognizing his service and contributions to the city. Council members expressed appreciation for Harrison's leadership, dedication, and willingness to serve Brooklet during his time on the council. Several speakers thanked him for his commitment to the community and for his role in guiding the city through ongoing growth, infrastructure projects, and day-to-day governance.

J. Ordinances:

1. Presentation of Ordinance No. 2025-031 – Amending and restating the Official Zoning Map of Brooklet, Georgia.

Motion To Approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-031

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

Second: Brad Anderson

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

2. Discussion and consideration to approve Ordinance No. 2025-032 – Rezoning property known as B06000100000 and located at 16862 HWY 80 East, Brooklet, Georgia 30415 from a zoning classification of R-1 to a zoning classification of C-2.
Motion to approve Ordinance No. 2025-032 – Rezoning property known as B06000100000 and located at 16862 HWY 80 East.

Motion To Approve

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

Second: James Harrison

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

Nayes: None

Recused: Brad Anderson

The motion carried 4-0

K. Other Item(s):

1. Motion to approve the 2025 Lease Agreement between the City of Brooklet and the Blue Knights for leasing the Scout Hut at 100 Parker Avenue South.

Motion To Approve

Motion: James Harrison

Second: Brad Anderson

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

2. Discussion and consideration of a motion: Proposal for Brooklet Cemetery Improvements.

Motion To Approve

Motion: Brad Anderson

Second: Rebecca Kelly

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

3. Motion to approve a year-end employee recognition payment to full-time employees of \$250 and Part-time employees of \$100 as recommended by Interim City Manager Lori Phillips.

Motion To Approve

Motion: James Harrioss

Second: Keith Roughton

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

4. Discussion: City of Brooklet Parking Lot Ordinance

Council members discussed whether Brooklet's current parking lot ordinance should be reviewed, citing concerns that existing requirements may not be practical for older, non-conforming properties in the downtown area. Members noted that the ordinance generally requires paved or asphalt parking, a standard that can be difficult or impossible to meet on historic properties and lots with space or infrastructure limitations. Several council members agreed that while the ordinance may work for new construction, it does not adequately account for long-standing buildings that predate modern development standards. Council agreed to ask the Planning Commission to review the ordinance and return with recommendations for possible updates to better align the city's regulations with the realities of Brooklet's historic downtown.

L. Adjournment

Motion To Approve

Motion: Rebecca Kelly

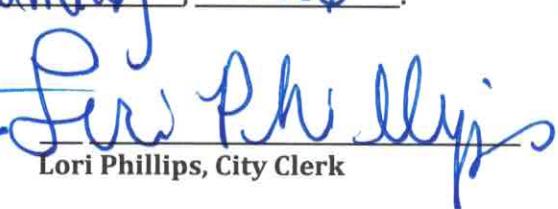
Second: Brad Anderson

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

Nayes: None

The motion carried 5-0

Approved this 15 day of January, 2026.

 
L.W. (Nicky) Gwinnett, Jr., Mayor Lori Phillips, City Clerk

