



120 North Essa Street, Lake Park, Georgia 31636  
City Hall 229-559-7470  
Fax 229-559-7499

City of Lake Park  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
January 06, 2026  
6:00 pm

**Members present** were Mayor Jena Sandlin, Council Member Busby Courson, Council Member Zach Fletcher, Council Member Arthur Keckley, and Council Member Blake McMillan

**Staff Present:** City Clerk Lisa Johnson, Deputy Clerk Laura Levesque, Chief Artavious Verdell, Asst Fire Chief Joey Perkins, Public Works Technician Jeff Patterson, and Municipal Clerk Amber Taylor

**Others Present:** City Attorney Drew Parrish-Bennett, Judge David Sanbach

Mayor Jena Sandlin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jena Sandlin gave the invocation.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the pledge.

Mayor Jena Sandlin commenced a special presentation in appreciation for the completion of the term of service for outgoing Council Members.

In gratitude for selfless service to the City of Lake Park, Ms. Michelle Lane was presented with a token of appreciation.

In gratitude for selfless service to the City of Lake Park, Mr. Oscar Griffith was presented with a token of appreciation.

Judge Sandbach administered the Oath of Office for Chief Artavious Verdell.

Clerk Lisa Johnson administered the Oath of Office for incoming Council Member Arthur Keckley.

Clerk Lisa Johnson administered the Oath of Office for incoming Council Member Blake McMillan.

Mayor Jena Sandlin requested a review of the meeting minutes for the December 2, 2025, Regular Meeting, December 11, 2025, Public Hearing, and December 18, 2025, Called Meeting. Council Member Busby Courson made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the December 2 225 Regular Meeting and the December 18, 2025 Called meeting. Council Member Zach Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Mayor Jena Sandlin opened the forum for questions from the community.

## **CITIZENS' CONCERNS:**

- Carl Spano (805 Sand Crane Circle) – Despite missing the approval meeting, he was appreciative that the City Council took some of his comments for the Public Hearing into consideration. Mr. Spano also commented that January was usually the month to confirm committee appointments, but noticed it was not on the agenda. Mr. Spano reiterated his interest in the Ethics Committee position that is vacated by Mr. Keckley's oath as a Council Member.

Mr. Busby Courson made a motion to appoint Mr. Carl Spano to the Ethics Committee. Mr. Arthur Keckley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

- Jeff Patterson (503 Ricks Avenue) – Wanted to express his appreciation for Ms. Michelle Lane and Mr. Oscar Griffith and acknowledge their service. Mr. Patterson also wanted to express his appreciation for Chief Verdell and the Fire Department for the Santa Run that was executed on Christmas Eve, and how it was received by the children in Lake Park. Mr. Patterson stated how he would like to see the event continue forward due to the positive impact within the community.
- Sandy Cole (805 Lane Drive, Apt J30) – Wanted to express concerns about the dogs located at the Lane Drive Apartments. Ms. Cole stated that three pit bulls are allowed out without a leash, and that there is fear from other residents for both their smaller animals and for themselves from these dogs. Animal Control has been called, complaints have been made to the Police Department, but nothing has been corrected. Ms. Cole has the property owner, but nothing has changed. Mayor Sandlin has requested Chief Verdell to check into the situation.
- Pat Brown (809 Main Street) – Ms. Brown wanted to reiterate that the Lane Drive Apartments have not been maintained properly, and that the property owner is requiring the renters to pay for their own repairs. Ms. Brown feels that there is a negative impact on the surrounding community. Clerk Lisa Johnson stated that a letter has been sent to the owner of the property, and they have until January 23 to respond.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS/DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

### **Fire Department:** Fire Chief Joey Perkins

- Presented the activity report for December.
- The department is currently evaluating the need to replace turnout gear, as some of the equipment has passed its service date. A complete setup is approximately \$4000 per set.
- The department is also evaluating the need for mics for the radios. These are priced at \$400 per mic.
- Chief Perkins wanted to thank the maintenance department for the repairs that were completed at the fire department.
- In response to the question from Council Member Arthur Keckley, Chief Perkins responded that morale has improved, and he is receiving notifications from former volunteers who are willing to return.
- In response to the question from Council Member Busby Courson, Chief Perkins responded that they would need an estimated 4 sets of turnout gear to be current, but would need to forward plan for sets that will expire over the next two years.

### **Police Department:** Chief Art Verdell

- Presented the activity report for December.

- Chief Verdell updated the City Council on the status of new personnel and that the department is fully staffed.
- Chief Verdell wanted to express his appreciation for Jeff Patterson's participation in the Santa Run event.

**Maintenance/Public Works Department:** Public Works Technician Jeff Patterson

- Presented the activity report for December.
- The Maintenance department will continue to remove the remaining Christmas Event decorations.
- Update to the GEFA grant is that the Engineering firm has begun the survey and is submitting the 811 locates to work toward having an updated plat map of the existing infrastructure. This will allow the engineer to complete the project proposal accurately.
- Mr. Patterson wanted to discuss the possibility of utilizing the LMIG grant to potentially pave Essa Street and Lawrence Street. There are pothole issues currently, but the cost of maintenance will continue to increase until the streets are paved.

**Administration:** City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Administration report.
  - "Island" Annexation has been turned over to the City Attorney to commence processing. The County Manager has been contacted and informed. SGRC has been contacted to assist with this operation.
  - The Old Lake Park Cemetery. Administration is currently working with the Church to acquire information to be directed to the City Attorney. The Church has located a portion of the documents, but they are still in discovery for the remaining information.
  - Policy review and updates are ongoing. The Personnel Policy has been given to the City Attorney for review. Additional policies are under review before submission to the City Council.
  - Both the Court Clerk and Chief Verdell are registered for TAC training to take place on January 7.
  - There are remaining committee vacancies. The Citizen's Advisory Committee (1), Planning Commission (1), and Board of Zoning and Appeals (2). All interested parties should contact City Hall.
  - Water Ordinance. Some differences will be addressed with the new business.
  - Homestead Exemption Procedures. The City Clerk is researching whether an annual resolution is required to continue to opt out. Three public meetings would be required, if it is necessary.
  - Capital Budgets need to be set for FY2026. Projects need to be identified and prioritized based upon receipt of funds.
  - The Administrative Department has begun the closeout of FY2025 and Budget Amendments.

**Financial Reports:** City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Financial report for November.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to accept the Financial Report for November. Council Member Arthur Keckley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

### **Unfinished Business**

- Antique Cemetery.

### **New Business**

- Approval of 2026 Qualifying Fees. Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to approve the 3% qualifying fees in accordance with Georgia Law. Council Member Arthur Keckley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.
- Request by Pastor Joseph Bell for traffic control and barricades for a St. Luke Freewill Baptist Church event on January 31, 2026. Pastor Bell is requesting that the road be closed between 106 and 506 Pine Circle from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The council approved this request to be coordinated with Chief Verdell and Public Works.
- Ordinance 21 – Water Ordinance. There are discrepancies between the latest amended water ordinance and the fees currently applied for various water department ancillary services. It is requested that the city council enforce the approved fee structure from the latest amendment. In addition, it is requested that the city council consider amending the water ordinance to remove the fee structure from the ordinance and for the fee structure and enforcement to be managed by a policy that may be updated by the City Council via vote from time to time.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to implement the rates as they were approved in Amendment 14 to Ordinance 21. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

City Attorney Drew Parrish-Bennett would like to research the validity of changing an established ordinance to remove the fee structure from a published ordinance before any changes to Ordinance 21 are proposed.

- Mayor Pro Tem Selection. City Attorney's legal opinion is that the selection of Mayor Pro Tem is not required until January 2027.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate and Minutes Review. Council Member Arthur Keckley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council entered Executive Session at 7:03 pm.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to reenter regular session. Council Member Arthur Keckley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council reconvened Regular Session at 7:33 pm.

Council Member Arthur Keckley made a motion to purchase the discussed Futch Property for \$35,000 plus associated fees. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion that, in reconsideration of the rezoning request by Mr. Steve McGee and the Lake Park Church of Christ for plat 0221A063B, to rezone the property to R-15. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to utilize the LMIG grant funds to improve Essa Street and Lawrence Street. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Arthur Keckley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

The next regular meeting will be held on February 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jena Sandlin, Mayor

2/3/2026  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Johnson, City Clerk

February 3, 2026  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Seal