City of Jasper

200 Burnt Mountain Road
Jasper, GA 30143
MINUTES | COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
Thursday, August 27, 2026, 6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT
Mayor Kirk Raffield
Jim Looney
John Foust
Brandon Hannah
Steve Lawrence
Tony Davis

STAFF
Brandon Douglas
Kim Goldener
Lorrie Waters
Lindsey Williams
Eise Allen
Matt Dawkins
John Sherrer
Josh Davis

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE
See Attachment "A"

MEMBERS ABSENT

LEGAL COUNSEL
David Syfan via phone

PRESS
Mari Livsey – Know Pickens

Ellie Pool – Pickens Progress

I. Call Meeting to Order — Mayor Raffield

Mayor Raffield called on Council Member Steve Lawrence to verify that a quorum was present.

II. Adopt Agenda — Mayor Raffield

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to adopt the agenda. Council Member Brandon Hannah provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Planning Commission Update — Elise Allen

a. Mark Roland / Roland Tire (Old Philadelphia Road): Variance request to Section 94-117(3) to utilize gravel rather than asphalt paving for parking in order to maintain a pervious surface and assist on-site stormwater infiltration. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval.
b. Brian Priest / Priest Metal Recycling (183 Cornett Lane South): Rezoning request from C-2 (General Commercial) to M-1 (General Industry) to allow for aluminum recycling operations. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval.
c. Clipper Petroleum (2101 Waleska Highway 108): Sign variance request to install a 30-degree pie-shaped sign measuring approximately 22 feet in height and 15.75 feet in width, which requires relief because unlisted sign types are prohibited by city ordinance. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval.

IV. Event Applications — Kim Goldener

a. Pickens High School Homecoming Parade (Monday, October 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM): Assistant Principal Holly Riley presented details on the parade. The event will use the city's new parade route, staging on Stegall Drive (before Mark Whitfield Street), proceeding to Sanders Street and Mary Street, and concluding at Lee Newton Park for the school fair/carnival. North Main Street will close at 5:00 PM for barricades. With no objections from Council, the item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for the regular September 14th meeting.
b. Georgia Premier Wrestling in Perrow Park (Saturday, October 24, 2026, and Saturday, November 21, 2026): Representatives and wrestlers from Georgia Premier Wrestling proposed two upcoming autumn events following the success of the Main Street wrestling event. With no objections from Council, the item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for the regular September 14th meeting.

V. Veterans Organizations UGA Game & Tailgate (Saturday, September 19, 2026): Commander Dave Jones (American Legion Post 149) presented an informational overview for a joint veterans' community tailgate party at Hensley Plaza to celebrate the acquisition of the new Veterans Hall and enjoy college football alongside the September Downtown Live festivities. The item will be placed on the next agenda for publicity.

VI. **2027 Health Insurance Renewal** Brandon Douglas

City Manager Douglas presented the 2027 employee health insurance renewal through GMA / Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield (MSI broker). The city achieved a 3% renewal rate (down from an initial 5% quote) with no changes to deductibles, co-pays, or plan design, resulting in a total budget impact of $35,531 for health ($36,930 including dental). Because the acceptance deadline is September 4th, formal action was required during the work session.

- Conclusion: A motion was made to accept the health insurance renewal as presented and absorb the increase. A second was provided. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. **ADA Compliance** Kim Goldener

Deputy City Manager Goldener updated Council on required ADA compliance policies stemming from federal project funding (USDA and GDOT TAP grants), municipal building improvements, and upcoming 2028 website compliance deadlines. Draft documents prepared with City Attorney David Syfan will be presented at the September 14th meeting for formal adoption, including:

a. Public ADA Notice posting.
b. Formal ADA Grievance Procedure and timeline.
c. Official appointment of a City ADA Coordinator.

VIII. **City Manager's Office Update** Brandon Douglas

a. 2027 Budget Process - Department requests have been submitted without management filtering. Preliminary general fund figures project approximately $7.94 million in revenue against $14 million in expenditure requests; the water/sewer fund projects $8 million in revenue against $9.5 million in operational/capital expenses. Figures will be refined upon receipt of the tax digest and subsequent millage rate direction.
b. Animal Control Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Ordinance - Staff distributed a draft IGA with Pickens County to mirror county animal control regulations and formalize service delivery discussions from the May joint meeting. This will be an action item on September 14th ahead of the September 24th joint meeting.
c. EPD Drought Update (Kim Goldener – Deputy City Manager) - EPD held a statewide teleconference extending the Level 1 Drought Declaration. Pickens County is currently running at least 10 inches below normal rainfall. Outdoor watering remains restricted between 4:00 PM and 10:00 AM. City departments are actively conserving water and addressing reported water/sewer line leaks.

IX. **Discussion of Bird City** Mayor Raffield

a. Atlantic Coast Conservancy (Dr. Keller) requested the city pursue a "Bird City" designation (following Decatur, GA). Staff will review bandwidth constraints and bring the item forward for discussion on September 14th with Dr. Keller.
b. Emergency Infrastructure Repairs (Late-Breaking):
    - Indian Forest Stormwater Culvert: A failing culvert pipe will undergo emergency work-order replacement by an on-call contractor.
    - State Route 53 Sewer Main Repair (in front of Speed Burger): Discovered during camera inspections in the center turn lane. Emergency night repairs are scheduled to begin Friday at 11:00 PM with potential lane or full-road detours (using Ridgewood/Burnt Mountain and Georgiana/Bell Ave). GDOT was notified and issued an emergency utility permit.
c. Customer Service Cash Operations: Finance Director Lindsey Williams noted that local banks are discontinuing penny distributions; cash transactions resulting in penny change will have credits applied directly to the customer's next utility bill.

X. Executive Session - Legal Mayor Raffield

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss legal matters. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to enter the Executive Session @ 6:44pm and Council Member Brandon Hannah provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to exit the Executive Session. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to end the Executive Session @ 6:58pm and Council Member Brandon Hannah provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Administrative Appeal (Sign Application Denial)

Mayor Raffield made the announcement that the City Council is upholding the decision previously made pertaining to the Burger King sign administrative sign appeal.

Conclusion: Mayor Raffield called for a motion. Council Member Brandon Hannah made a motion to uphold administration's decision denying the sign application appeal brought by Ellen Smith, Esq., on behalf of Raymond Walls and Terell M. Walls (Trustees of the Raymond & Terry Walls Declaration of Trust) and GPS Hospitality Acquisition Company LLC, and to authorize the Mayor to execute any necessary documentation. A second was provided by Council Member John Foust.

XII. Adjourn

Mayor Raffield called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:59pm. Council Member Jim Looney made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Steve Lawrence provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor, Kirk D. Raffield

City Clerk, Lorrie Waters

CITY OF JASPER CORPORATE SEAL GEORGIA

"A"

PLEASE SIGN IN

JASPER
City Council Work Session
SIGN IN ROSTER
August 27, 2026

PRINT NAME	ADDRESS/OR BUSINESS AFFILIATION
Kim G	CoT
Holly Rylee left 5	Pickens High School
DAVID JONES	American Legion
Josh Cantrell	170 Carter Road
Anthony Camp	777 wright rd
Austin Towsley	600 Ellen way
Alani White	1521 Evanston ct.
Jason Sanders	GPW
Ellie Pool	Pickens County Progress