



CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA
1245 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 20,
Mableton, GA 30126
March 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Chair and Board Member Joel Cope
Vice Chair and Board Member Tammi Daniel
Secretary and Board Member Patricia Thomas
Board Member Ebony McCants
Board Member Karen Clarke
Board Member Brandon Mitchell
Board Member Angela Weston

SPECIAL CALLED ETHICS BOARD MEETING AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. Approval of February 10, 2026 Ethics Board Special Called Meeting Minutes**
- 4. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL ITEMS**
 - a. Consideration of Finalized Processes and Procedures for Ethics Complaints Discussion**
- 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- 6. NEW BUSINESS**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility, disability, or foreign language may contact the City Clerk at (404) 927-9502 or susan.hiott@mableton.gov at least three days prior to the meeting. The clerk can be located at the City of Mableton Offices, Riverside EpiCenter, 135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, Georgia 30168 during regular office hours.



Mableton Ethics Board – Special Called Meeting Minutes

City of Mableton

Ethics Board Special Called Meeting Minutes

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 6:34 PM EST

Location: 1245 Veterans Memorial Highway Suite 20 (Administrative Building)

Board Members Present: Board Member Brandon Mitchell, Board Member Angela Weston, Board Chair Joel Cope, Board Secretary Patricia Thomas, Board Vice-Chair Tammi Daniel (I), Board Member Ebony McCants, Board Member Karen Clarke (I)

Others Present: Attorney Earle Turner, City Clerk Susan Hiott

1. **Call to order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM EST
2. **Roll Call:** Board Secretary Patricia Thomas called the roll: A quorum (5) of the board was present. (Two Board Members joined the meeting after the Approval of Minutes, meaning that all 7 Board members were then present to conduct business).
3. **Approval of Minutes:** *Motion* was made by Board Member Angela Weston and seconded by Board Member Ebony McCants to accept the meeting minutes for December 9, 2025. The motion carried, 5-0.
4. **Organizational and Procedural Items**

The Board reviewed the following Ethics Board process documents

a. City of Mableton Ethics Complaint Form

1. Add **District** to Section 2 of the form

b. Investigation Checklist

1. The Board will complete all line items on the Investigation Checklist to ensure all steps were properly handled when reviewing a claim.
2. At the bottom of the checklist, add a line that indicates 'By these signatures, these persons certify that the above process was followed'.
3. Add a list of the panel reviewers to the checklist and sign off on it
4. Add the date the checklist was signed off by the reviewers on the panel
5. Add name of official complainant in the upper right corner, the accused member, log the matter number (there is a case file for each complaint that comes through with the date complaint was received).



c. Hearing Procedures of the City of Mableton Board of Ethics

1. There will be a conflict of interest when: A board member will not sit on a panel that is investigating the Council Member that appointed them.
 2. In Section 3.3 – add - The selection process shall be witnessed and documented by another city official.
 3. In Section 3.3 add - The Board Member cannot sit on the Hearing Panel If the person being investigated appointed the board member.
 4. We need a response to who will fund the service of the complaint.
 5. In section 3.5 add – Replace (is expressly authorized) with - The hearing panel subject to the approval by the City Council
 6. Add 'vet and maintain a list'
 7. Section #4 – Remove the word '**at**' that comes between investigators and annually
 8. Section 3.7, #1c- After Sec. 1..2.9, add 'of the code' to this sentence.
 9. Section 3.8 a #6 - The funds for the same, will be provided by City Council subject to its approval.
 10. Section 3.9 – Add this before #1 – No one other than the panel members assigned to this matter will be present in the room during deliberations.
 11. Section 3.9 #5 Change pursuant to Sec 1.2.7 vii - Add 'of the code' to the end of this sentence.
 12. Section 3.10 – Add investigation checklist to the list of what is to be contained in the Complaint File.
- A. We will have another meeting to approve the edits proposed by the Board. The next Call Meeting will take place on March 10, 2026 @ 6:30 PM (18:30).
 - B. The Ethics Board Chair will work with the City Manager, City Clerk and Finance Department as to those items which will require the expenditure of any funds from the City's Budget.
 - C. Secretary will send out the latest updates to the forms. Revisions will be made by the city Attorney and will be sent to the Secretary to send out to the Board. The Findings of Facts document will be added to the list.
 - D. Findings of Fact document will be developed by the Subcommittee that worked on the Guidelines and will be circulated to the rest of the Ethics Board for comment, before the March 2026 meeting.



E. The Findings of Facts document should contain:

- Complaint Number
- Panelist names
- Date of hearing
- Complaint Summary (brief summation of the complaint)
- Description of what was investigated
- Code section number(s)
- The recommendation of the Ethics Board

5. Unfinished Business: None

6. New Business: None

Adjournment: *Motion* was made by Board Member Angela Weston to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM EDT. Board Member Ebony McCants seconded. The motion carried, 7-0.

Prepared By: Board Secretary Patricia Thomas



HEARING PROCEDURES OF THE CITY OF MABLETON BOARD OF ETHICS

ARTICLE I. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

Section 1.1 – Purpose

These Procedures establish a clear, comprehensive, and durable process for receiving, reviewing, investigating, and resolving ethics complaints. They are designed to demonstrate that a formal process exists, protect the Board, and provide sufficient direction so that all members can apply these Procedures effectively now and in the future.

Section 1.2 – Authority

These Procedures supplement, and do not conflict with, Chapter 1, Article 2 of the City of Mableton Code of Ordinances (“Code”) and applicable state law.

ARTICLE 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Section 2.1 – Impartiality

Board members and Hearing Panelists shall remain neutral and avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Section 2.2 – Consistency

Complaints shall be processed following a consistent set of procedures and standards as established by the Board.

Section 2.3 – Confidentiality

Complaints and investigations shall be handled discreetly to the extent permitted by law.

Section 2.4 – Due Process

Respondent shall be afforded timely notice, the opportunity to be heard, and the right to counsel.

Section 2.5 – Transparency of Outcome

Findings and recommendations shall be clearly documented and transmitted to the City Council as required by ordinance.

ARTICLE III. COMPLAINT PROCESSING PROCEDURES

Section 3.1 – Receipt and Initial Review

- (1) All Complaints must be filed with the City Clerk via submission of the Ethics Complaint Form.
- (2) Once received, the City Clerk will create both a physical and electronic Complaint File in which all documents and notifications shall be kept.
- (3) The City Clerk will assign each file a matter number to identify the Complaint and subsequent documents.
- (4) The City Clerk will notify the entire Board that the Complaint has been received.
- (5) The City Clerk shall review the Complaint for proper form, including:
 - (a) Sworn and signed under oath;
 - (b) Complainant's name, address, and email;
 - (c) Filed within six (6) months of the alleged conduct;
 - (d) Allegations involve only one city official;
 - (e) Cites to specific provisions of the Code.
- (6) The City Clerk will confirm that the Complaint is not made against an individual seeking election as a City official, from the date qualifying opens for the elected office through the date of the election results are certified.
- (7) The City Clerk will confirm that the Complaint does not arise from and/or is related to litigation and/or court proceedings.

- (8) If the Complaint is not in proper form or does not comply with the above requirements, it shall be rejected in writing by the City Clerk with a copy placed in the Complaint File.
- (9) The City Clerk will notify the entire Board of her determination after the initial review of compliance with proper form.

Section 3.2 – Service of Complaint

- (1) Properly filed Complaints shall be served on the Respondent within seven (7) calendar days.
- (2) Service shall be executed only by a person authorized under Georgia law— including a sheriff, deputy sheriff, marshal, certified process server, or other non-party individual at least eighteen (18) years of age who has been appointed or permitted to serve process.
- (3) Service shall be accomplished by delivering a copy of the Complaint personally to the Respondent, or by leaving it at the Respondent's personal residence.
- (4) Proof of service shall be documented and maintained by the City Clerk in the Complaint File.

Section 3.3 – Selection of the Board of Ethics Hearing Panel

- (1) Within seven (7) days after service of the Complaint to the Respondent, the City Clerk shall select three (3) members at random from the seven-member Board of Ethics to serve as the Hearing Panel.
- (2) The selection process shall be witnessed and documented by another City official.
- (3) Members shall disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- (4) Conflicted members shall be disqualified and replaced pursuant to Sec. 1.2.6(c).
- (5) Board members cannot sit on a Hearing Panel if the person being investigated appointed them.

- (6) The Hearing Panel shall select a Chair from among its members.

Section 3.4 – Preliminary Screening

- (1) The Hearing Panel shall first assess whether the Complaint is:
 - (a) Unjustified;
 - (b) Frivolous;
 - (c) Patently unfounded; or
 - (d) Insufficient to invoke the disciplinary jurisdiction of the City Council.
- (2) The Hearing Panel may dismiss the Complaint by written determination.
- (3) Dismissals must include a brief written explanation and be incorporated into the official record.

Section 3.5 – Investigation Phase

- (1) Hearing Panelists shall avoid ex-parte communications regarding the merits of the Complaint.
- (2) If the Complaint survives the preliminary screening, the Hearing Panel may conduct investigations directly or may retain an independent investigator when doing so is necessary to ensure impartiality, efficiency, or specialized expertise.
- (3) The Hearing Panel, subject to approval by the City Council, shall hire, contract with, or otherwise engage an investigator to assist with fact-finding, evidence collection, interviewing witnesses, reviewing records, or performing any other investigative tasks the Hearing Panel deems appropriate.
- (4) The investigator will be given a predetermined number of hours to conduct the investigation and provide a report to the Hearing Panel.

- (5) Funds for the retention of an investigator shall be maintained by the Board. The Hearing Panel shall have discretion to determine when the use of such funds is warranted and may authorize expenditures accordingly.
- (6) If additional time and/or funding to complete the investigation is needed, the Board will request further authorization from the City Council.
- (7) Whether conducted directly by the Hearing Panel or through an appointed investigator, the investigation may include:
 - (a) Requesting documents or records;
 - (b) Interviewing witnesses;
 - (c) Requesting written statements;
 - (d) Reviewing City records and relevant materials;
 - (e) Consulting with City staff or legal counsel; and
 - (f) Any additional fact-finding reasonably necessary to evaluate the Complaint.
- (8) All investigative activities by the Hearing Panel or Investigator shall be documented and placed in the file.

Section 3.6 – Pre-Identification of Investigators

- (1) The Board will vet and maintain a list of at least three (3) pre-identified, pre-screened investigators who may be engaged by the Hearing Panel as needed. Such individuals or firms may be evaluated and approved in advance based on relevant qualifications, independence, investigative experience, and familiarity with municipal ethics matters.
- (2) To be included on the pre-approved list, an investigator must meet criteria established by the Board, which may include:

- (a) Demonstrated investigative experience in legal, governmental, or ethics-related matters;
 - (b) Absence of conflicts of interest with the City, its officials, or the Board;
 - (c) Professional licensing or certification where applicable;
 - (d) Ability to testify competently at hearings or in any subsequent judicial review;
 - (e) Agreement to maintain confidentiality and comply with all applicable laws and procedures.
- (3) The Hearing Panel may select an investigator from the pre-approved list without requiring further Board action, provided funds for investigative services are available.
- (4) The Board shall review and update the list of pre-identified investigators annually to ensure continued qualifications and availability.

Section 3.7 – Notice and Hearing

- (1) The Respondent shall receive at least thirty (30) days' written notice of:
- (a) Hearing date, time, and location;
 - (b) Allegations and implicated Code provisions;
 - (c) Rights afforded under Sec. 1.2.9 of the Code.
- (2) A hearing shall occur within sixty (60) days of the filing of a properly filed Complaint unless dismissed at the preliminary stage.
- (3) Hearings shall include:
- (a) Testimony under oath;
 - (b) Opportunity for cross-examination of available witnesses;
 - (c) Opportunity for the Respondent to present evidence and witnesses.

- (4) A formal record of the hearing shall be maintained in both the physical and electronic Complaint File.

Section 3.8 – Court Reporter and Preservation of the Record

- (1) A certified court reporter shall be present at every hearing conducted by the Hearing Panel for the purpose of creating an accurate stenographic record of the proceedings.
- (2) The court reporter shall record all testimony, evidentiary presentations, objections, rulings, statements by Hearing Panelists, arguments by the Respondent or their counsel, and any other matters occurring on the record.
- (3) The transcript produced by the court reporter shall constitute the official record of the hearing for purposes of Board deliberations, City Council review, and any subsequent judicial proceedings.
- (4) The transcript shall be maintained by the City Clerk as part of the official Complaint File in accordance with applicable records retention laws. Copies shall be made available to the parties upon request, subject to any applicable costs or confidentiality restrictions.
- (5) If any recording equipment or stenographic process malfunctions, the Hearing Panel shall recess the hearing until the issue is corrected to ensure a complete and accurate record is preserved.
- (6) The funds for the same will be provided by City Council subject to its approval.

Section 3.9 – Findings and Recommendation

- (1) No one other than the panel members assigned to the matter will be present in the room during deliberations.
- (2) Following the hearing, the Hearing Panel shall deliberate in accordance with applicable law.

- (3) The Chair of the Hearing Panel shall be responsible for drafting the written findings of fact, conclusions, and the Hearing Panel's formal recommendation.
- (4) The draft opinion shall be circulated to the remaining Hearing Panelists for review, proposed revisions, and approval prior to final issuance.
- (5) Written findings of fact and recommendations shall be issued within seven (7) calendar days of the final hearing.
- (6) Such findings and recommendations shall be transmitted to the City Council for action pursuant to Sec. 1.2.7(vii) of the Code.

Section 3.10 – Recordkeeping and Closure

- (1) The Complaint File shall contain:
 - (a) The original Complaint;
 - (b) Proof of service;
 - (c) Hearing Panel selection records;
 - (d) Investigative materials;
 - (e) Investigation checklist;
 - (f) Hearing notices;
 - (g) Hearing transcript; and
 - (h) Written findings and recommendations.
- (2) All records shall be maintained by the City Clerk in accordance with applicable retention laws.

Investigation Checklist

Intake and Screening

- ☐ Complaint filed with City Clerk
- ☐ Complaint sworn under oath
- ☐ Complainant contact information provided
- ☐ Filed within six-month limitations period
- ☐ Single official named
- ☐ Specific Code sections cited
- ☐ Complaint served on accused within 7 days

Panel Formation

- ☐ Random draw conducted by Clerk with City official as witness within 7 days
- ☐ Panel members vetted for conflicts
- ☐ Conflicts disclosed and addressed
- ☐ Chair selected

Preliminary Review

- ☐ Jurisdiction confirmed
- ☐ Political-timing restriction reviewed
- ☐ Litigation-related exclusion reviewed
- ☐ Written dismissal issued (if applicable)

Investigation

- ☐ Investigation plan established
- ☐ Evidence requests documented
- ☐ Witness interviews documented
- ☐ Neutral fact-gathering maintained
- ☐ No ex-parte communications

Hearing

- ☐ Timely written notice provided
- ☐ Right to counsel acknowledged
- ☐ Accused individual received at least 30 calendar days written notice of hearing
- ☐ Hearing held within 60 calendar days after a properly filed complaint received, unless dismissed
- ☐ Testimony under oath
- ☐ Cross-examination permitted
- ☐ Hearing record maintained

Deliberation and Findings

- ☐ Findings based solely on record evidence
- ☐ Code provisions applied consistently
- ☐ Written findings completed
- ☐ Recommendation to mayor and council issued within 7 days

Post-Hearing

- ☐ Findings transmitted to City Council
- ☐ File completed and archived
- ☐ Recusal issues documented (if any)

By these signatures, these persons certify that the above listed process was followed

Panel Chair: _____

Panel Member 1: _____

Panel Member 2: _____

Adopted by the City of Mableton Board of Ethics on _____.

**CITY OF MABLETON
BOARD OF ETHICS HEARING PANEL
WRITTEN FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ethics Complaint No.: _____

Date Complaint Filed: _____

Respondent (Full name, Role): _____

Complainant: _____

Panel Members: _____

Panel Chair: _____

Hearing Date: _____

I. AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION

This matter comes before the City of Mableton Board of Ethics Panel pursuant to Chapter 1, Article 2 of the City of Mableton Code of Ordinances (the “Code”). The Panel finds as follows:

- ☐ The complaint was filed in proper form under Sec. 1.2.7 of the Code.
- ☐ The complaint was timely filed within the six (6) month limitations period.
- ☐ The allegations fall within the jurisdiction of the Board of Ethics and City Council.
- ☐ No political-timing or litigation-related prohibition applies under Sec. 1.2.7(viii)–(ix) of the Code.

Jurisdictional Finding:

- ☐ Jurisdiction established
 - ☐ Jurisdiction not established (if not established, explain below)
-
-

II. PANEL COMPOSITION AND IMPARTIALITY

1. The Panel was properly constituted pursuant to Sec. 1.2.6(a) by random draw conducted by the City Clerk.
2. Each Panel member disclosed any actual or potential conflicts of interest.
3. ☐ No conflicts were identified.

☐ The following conflict(s) were identified and resolved as follows:

By signing below, the Panel affirms that it conducted this matter impartially and without bias.

Panel Chair: _____

Panel Member 1: _____

Panel Member 2: _____

III. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Panel makes the following findings regarding the procedural handling of this complaint:

- Date complaint served on Respondent: _____
- Date(s) of preliminary review: _____
- Date(s) of investigation activities (if any): _____
- Date(s) of hearing(s): _____
- Notice of hearing provided at least thirty (30) days in advance: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Respondent represented by counsel: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Court reporter present: ☐ Yes ☐ No

A hearing was conducted in accordance with Sec. 1.2.9 of the Code, including the taking of sworn testimony and the opportunity for cross-examination of available witnesses.

IV. ALLEGATIONS AND CODE PROVISIONS AT ISSUE

The complaint alleges that the Respondent violated the following provision(s) of the City of Mableton Code of Ethics:

- Section(s): _____

Summary of Allegations:

V. EVIDENTIARY RECORD

C-1: [Doc name/description] (Complainant)

C-2: [Doc name/description]

R-1: [Doc name/description] (Respondent)

R-2: [Doc name/description]

W-1: [Name, role] – testified to [brief substance].

W-2: [Name, role] – testified to [brief substance].

Respondent – testified [yes/no/statement].

Complainant – testified [yes/no/statement].

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

Based solely on the evidence presented, the Panel makes the following findings of fact by a preponderance of the evidence:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Attach additional pages if necessary.)

VII. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Applying the facts found above to the Code of Ethics provisions cited, the Panel concludes as follows:

- ☐ The evidence does not establish a violation of the Code of Ethics.
- ☐ The evidence establishes a violation of the Code of Ethics as follows:

Analysis:

VIII. PANEL DETERMINATION

- ☐ Complaint dismissed (specify basis):

- ☐ Violation found

If a violation is found, the Panel notes that the authority to impose penalties rests with the City Council pursuant to Sec. 1.2.10.

IX. RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to Sec. 1.2.7(vii), the Panel submits the following recommendation:

- ☐ No action
- ☐ Public reprimand or censure
- ☐ Request for resignation
- ☐ Other (explain): _____

Rationale for Recommendation:

X. CERTIFICATION

The undersigned members of the Board of Ethics Panel certify that the foregoing findings and recommendation were adopted by a majority vote of the Panel and are based solely on the evidence presented in the record. Further, the Panel understands that this document may contain confidential personnel or investigative information and that unauthorized disclosure is prohibited.

Panel Chair

Date: _____

Panel Member

Date: _____

Panel Member

Date: _____

Filed with the City Clerk on: _____