CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA

Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
May 12, 2025 at 6:00 PM

The Honorable Michael Owens, Mayor
The Honorable Ron Davis, District 1 Councilmember
The Honorable Dami Oladapo, District 2 Councilmember
The Honorable Keisha Jeffcoat, Mayor Pro Tem/District 3 Councilmember
The Honorable Patricia Auch, District 4 Councilmember
The Honorable TJ Ferguson, District 5 Councilmember
The Honorable Debora Herndon, District 6 Councilmember

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Owens called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hiott conducted the roll call.

3. AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

a. FY 2026 Eco-Friendly Fleet Program Presentation - Jake Kelley of Wade Ford

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized Jake Kelley, Director of Fleet Sales at Wade Ford, as well as Xavier Ross, Special Projects Manager. Handouts were distributed and available in the official City record.

Mr. Kelley explained Ford's FinSimple Municipal Electrification Loan Program, which helps cities manage the high upfront cost of fleet vehicles by spreading payments over time. The municipal lease includes a $1 buyout option at the end of the term. He highlighted the electric vehicle component, noting it as a strong step in supporting the City's efforts to become a "green community".

Mr. Kelley noted the City is considering the Ford F-150 Lightning Fleet Truck and the Ford Mach-E EV Sedan. He emphasized their electric, low-maintenance design and highlighted key features. He played a video showcasing the lease program (The presentation is available for reference with a link to the video included).

Councilmember Ferguson asked if the FinSimple program includes maintenance. Mr. Kelley said it offers a zero-mileage cap and 8-year warranty, with maintenance plans available. He will check with the head of Municipal EV for an EV-specific plan. Manager Ross stated that he has contacted other cities about their EV maintenance experience to help the City anticipate potential needs.

Mr. Kelley noted a hybrid option is available. City Manager Tanks asked him to discuss costs, including capital purchase vs. lease pricing for various eco-friendly vehicle sizes. Mr. Kelley provided details and presented the options.

Councilmember Ferguson asked if the plan includes charging stations; Manager Ross said they are separate. Mayor Pro Tem inquired about the number of anticipated vehicles, and Mr. Ross estimated 6–10 additional, noting the City currently has 4. City Manager Tanks outlined the City's current needs and said future decisions will come before Council annually.

Councilmember Herndon asked about the additional benefits of the plan. Mr. Ross said some cities combine leasing and purchasing, noting this plan offers cost savings and flexibility for upgrades or trade-ins. City Manager Tanks added that EV rotation depends more on battery life than mileage.

Mr. Kelley highlighted that the lease option affects the operational budget but allows fleet fulfillment without full upfront payment, aiming to minimize overall budget impact. He mentioned that Ford can buy out a lease, but with capital outlay, the owner is responsible for the resale. Lastly, he noted that the lease really offers simplified financing for government entities but must be listed as a lease due to the non-proliferation clause.

Mr. Ross asked the Mayor and Council for direction on the matter. Mayor Owens stated that the decision depends on the number and pace of vehicle acquisitions, and the final direction is to return to Council with hard numbers. City Manager Tanks assured that a review of the financial options and an assessment of the City's vehicle needs will be conducted before the item returns, noting some pros and cons of both options.

Councilmember Herndon asked if purchasing multiple vehicles in bulk would include a discount. Mr. Kelley responded that the City would qualify for a Government Price Concession (GPC) per vehicle.

Mayor Owens asked what would happen if dealership vehicles were priced lower than the state contract rate. Mr. Kelley provided an example in response.

Councilmember Ferguson asked about the City’s potential need for a van. Manager Ross confirmed the City has cost estimates, though it wouldn’t fall under the state contract.

b. FY 2026 Budgeting Priorities Presentation - City Manager Bill Tanks and Finance Director Karen Ellis

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized City Manager Tanks and Finance Director Ellis. City Manager Tanks highlighted that this marks a significant milestone for Mableton, as the City moves toward its first officially adopted budget for FY2026. He noted that the presentation reflects the priorities discussed during the City's Spring Planning Conference and projected spending trends thus far.

Director Ellis outlined the budget priorities and sought direction from the Mayor and Council. She noted that the final budget will be proposed on the 28th, with first and second readings on June 11th and 25th, followed by adoption. She provided an overview of the FY2026 Budget Calendar and emphasized that the City is using a priority-driven budgeting method.

Director Eliis presented an overview of the general fund operating budget, detailing each department's current budget status, including increases or decreases, and comparing approved vs. proposed FTE (Full-Time Employees).

Councilmember Auch asked about the benefit of moving the Public Relations role from the Communications department to the Mayor's Office. City Manager Tanks explained that placing it under the Chief of Staff ensures that the role has proper supervision.

Mayor Pro Tem asked for clarity of the FTE for Council. Councilmember Oladapo asked for clarity of the FTEs for Community Development. Director Ellis provided clarity for both.

Mayor Pro Tem acknowledged that the City now has 18 departments. City Manager Tanks explained that the City has become more sophisticated in finance, with improved fund allocation. While many departments expanded, they did not grow in staff but rather enhanced in accounting processes.

Councilmember Ferguson asked for clarity on the Innovation & Technology department budget numbers. Director Ellis provided clarity. She noted that in the spending plan certain positions were assumed. The City adopted a Class and Pay Plan. She noted it is an increase in staff from last year, but it isn't an increase to the Class and Pay Plan that was already approved by the Council, it was just reallocated. Director Ellis confirmed to the Council that they would see an extremely detailed breakdown on the 28th.

Councilmember Ferguson asked about the newly created Facilities and Property Management department. City Manager Tanks explained that it was established as an accounting method, with the funds previously included in the City Manager's budget. He continued to provide further clarification.

Councilmember Auch asked about the decrease in parks capital. Mr. Tanks explained that the funds were moved to the Capital Expenditures Fund, a non-operating fund. This capital remains permanently as a placeholder, allowing the City to build without needing to reallocate the budget. Lastly, she asked about the URA budget. It was explained that it is separate from the City's operating budget, and a breakdown will be proposed at the meeting on the 28th. City Manager Tanks emphasized that he and the finance department are always available for questions.

c. Special Services District (SSD) Six Flags - Economic Development Director Artie Jones & Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby

Mayor Owens acknowledged the SSD item and noted that, to maintain scheduling and streaming logistics, it would be moved to the regular meeting agenda.

4. PRE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA REVIEW

Attorney Walker-Ashby recommended adjourning the current meeting and, upon Council's approval of the regular meeting agenda, adding the SSD presentation. Mayor Owens agreed and noted that the item would be moved to Item 7 – Presentations on the Regular Meeting Agenda.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED) FOR LITIGATION (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(B)(1)(A)REAL ESTATE(O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(1)) PERSONNEL (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(2)) AND MISC. EXEMPTIONS (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(4)&(5))

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Oladapo to Adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Jeffcoat seconded. The motion passed.

Mayor Owens adjourned the meeting at 7:33pm.

Dr. Michael Owens, Mayor

Susan Hiott, City Clerk