



**CITY OF TOCCOA**  
**CITY COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES • NOVEMBER 24, 2025**

**Work Session**

**City Commission/Court Room**

**3:30 PM**

92 North Alexander, Toccoa, GA 30577

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Carter called the work session to order at 3:30 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Terry Carter	Mayor	Present	
Evan Hellenga	Vice Mayor	Present	
Michelle Jamieson	Commissioner	Present	
Gail Fry	Commissioner	Present	
Ron Matheson	Commissioner	Present	
Fredda O. Wheeler	City Manager	Present	
John Dickerson	Attorney	Absent	
Beth Rider	City Clerk	Present	

**II. AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Update on the Ritz Expansion

Mayor Carter gave an update on the Ritz expansion. J Davis Construction provided a formal base bid of \$2,998,529 for construction of the Ritz Theater annex based on the current plans. A spreadsheet was provided that outlined a proposed bond issue to fund the project. Mayor Carter stated after the boring results there is no concern of an underground spring and the water table is well in the normal range. The Fire Department requested the annex be sprinkled and that has been included in the bid. Mayor Carter discussed the financing including the construction, bond issuance, ARC Grant, SPLOST, Tower repayment.

Vice-Mayor Hellenga asked about the lobby paneling base bid of \$110,000.00. Mayor Carter stated there is a contingency in the bid of \$120,000.00 that is not doing the millwork, if we do not use the \$120,000.00 that can be added back. Vice-Mayor Hellenga asked how many times the plans have been revised. The Engineer stated there is only one major plan revision. Vice-Mayor Hellenga asked if there was ever any effort to look at reducing the square footage and cost of project beyond initial proposal. Mayor Carter stated no sir, we voted at our last work session to get a price on the building as it was, only changes were those made by staff. Commissioner Jamieson commended J. Davis for cutting out \$200,000.00 and adding a sprinkler system, changing the direction of the sewer saved money. Jacob with J. Davis Construction stated it saved about \$20,000; the \$3,100,000 was a projected cost. Vice-Mayor Hellenga stated typically we plan to use grant money to fund a project what we have don't last for a couple of projects. When we got the project we were just made aware of it and had no interaction; we have a grandiose, luxurious building with three facades that added considerable cost. We have a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Toccoa when we look at the Ritz it is not a necessity, it is a money loser for Toccoa. Commissioners were not happy with the size and scope with all the other needs the City has now. Vice-Mayor Hellenga stated he has a list of needs the City of Toccoa has, one has to question whether this project as is a responsible project, it is extravagant for this town.

Commissioner Jamieson stated she did not have a concern about the numbers, J. Davis did

their due diligence and that is not the problem. Commissioner Jamieson stated her problem is we had \$975,000.00 to work with and this is a \$3,000,000.00 project; she does not know of any company or business or municipality that is willing to put \$2,100,000.00 into something we are not gaining any more seats over. We are gaining two toilets and a concession stand out of this; we are not addressing the needs of the City. Commissioner Jamieson stated the problem is the City of Toccoa has major infrastructure and water needs that we need to be concerned about than putting an addition onto the Ritz Theatre. Commissioner Jamieson stated we wanted to become a Regional Water supplier and that is what we have become; if we have one major failure we will not be able to get the money to pay for what we have to do to fulfill our obligations. We have contracts with other counties and cities and the citizens of Toccoa and Stephens County we have an obligation to get water to their businesses and homes. We could put \$3,100,000.00 into something to guarantee our obligations not something that is a want; this is a want and not a need. Mayor Carter stated he respected her opinion and stated over the last couple of years we have received at least a million in current SPLOST than expected, we are looking at an opportunity to bring a hotel to our city, the Hotel/Motel tax alone would make half of our annual payment. We passed another SPLOST for next year where there is \$5,000,000.00 allocated for water we will collect. Mayor Carter stated next year we need to make it a priority to start working with Engineers to plan for a water plant, we have property above the current one, but in order to build a water plant we will need Federal and State dollars. Mayor Carter stated we will soon be able to re-negotiate our agreements with other counties, which is another opportunity to increase revenue. After further discussion of items within the City that need to be addressed, Davidson Creek dredging, pumps, finishing the water line, new water plant, City Hall renovations, water pressure in downtown, Police Department relocation, the needs are significant. Vice-Mayor Hellenga stated he does not oppose an expansion but this one is too grand and glorious for him. After no further discussion the item was moved to the regular meeting for a vote.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>PRESENTATION</b>
----------------	---------------------

2. Discussion of the Police Department Relocation

Commissioner Jamieson discussed the relocation of the Police Department to Fernside. Commissioner Jamieson provided information from TruVista and breakdowns of bids. Further discussion of furniture, painting and discussion of police presence downtown. Police Chief discussed having upgraded security at City Hall and downtown. A security position will be present during hours of 8:00 am - 5:00 pm at the front door of City Hall. Vice-Mayor Hellenga stated he would like to still have a presence with someone downstairs where they are now. Chief Carlisle stated he will keep someone in the Evidence Department downstairs.

Commissioner Jamieson stated Lynn Walton has applied for a T-Mobile Grant. Mayor Carter stated he thinks this is a good thing and that we will have presence at City Hall and there is a need for your services on Big A Road and it will be more centralized.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>PRESENTATION</b>
----------------	---------------------

3. Discussion of City Hall Remediation

City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated we had a Professional Environmentalist come in and do a study and present his findings. We had contractors come in and remediate the findings in the report. Ms. Wheeler stated we have reached out to four to five contractors and we had two contractors bid on the project. Ms. Wheeler stated she reached out to J. Davis Construction and they had recommendations to help us. Ms. Wheeler stated she reached out to four additional contractors, they have been here multiple times but at the present time we only have two quotes. Ms. Wheeler stated she would like to wait until she gets all the bids in to make it public knowledge, she has about six she is waiting on. Ms. Wheeler stated part of the remediation will be a total duct cleaning of our whole system. Ms. Wheeler stated as she will keep everyone updated as she gets quotes and estimates.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>PRESENTATION</b>
----------------	---------------------

4. Discussion of City Hall Renovation

Mayor Carter stated in this year's budget there is \$200,000.00 for renovations at City Hall for the entire building. We will do in phases and it may take a couple of budget years. The first phase will be flooring and we have quotes for LTV in the main area through Customer Service from door to door, replace carpet on second and third floor in other locations. Mayor Carter stated there is no price for flooring on the first floor due to the expectation of first floor being vacated. The price for flooring is \$76,000.00

Mayor Carter discussed the painting on second floor to include walls, trim and windows and will paint over the wall paper. The entrance area, customer service area, and current reception area is planned to be demoed. Mayor Carter stated we have a quote for painting in the Commission room and behind the Commission desk and that quote is \$9,200.00.

Mayor Carter stated we have a quote of \$6,400.00 for painting on the third floor to include walls, trim and windows and that does not include Main Street.

Mayor Carter stated the demo we are not sure how we will do it, City Manager has worked with the contractors doing remediation and will ask them for a quote to rip out area in front to take it back to the historic look. It will take the Code Enforcers office and Court Clerk office, it will open that area up, ceiling tiles will be replaced, we have a quote of \$1,870.00; we have doubled that price to demo the receptionist area in front of City Manager's office. Mayor Carter discussed other areas of renovations throughout City Hall to be the ceiling tiles, Commission room, front entrance, restroom renovations and new signage, employee breakroom and furniture as needed. Mayor Carter stated this is a punch list of our big picture vision, once we have it demoed we will reassess the front to see how we will lay it out and keep the historical integrity of the building.

Commissioner Fry stated it is very important that we keep the historical integrity of the building and we will address the employee restroom they can feel safe going in. Commissioners discussed how the front entrance will look with the reception area in front. Mayor Carter stated we will move this to the regular meeting for approval.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>PRESENTATION</b>
----------------	---------------------

5. Other Items of Discussion

**III. ADJOURN**

*M. Carter*

Mayor

*Beth Risher*

City Clerk

