



**CITY OF TOCCOA**  
**CITY COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES • JANUARY 27, 2026**

**Regular Meeting**

**City Commission/Court Room**

**5:00 PM**

92 North Alexander, Toccoa, GA 30577

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Hellenga called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION**

Reverend Paul Garrison gave the Invocation.

**PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Attorney Jay Doss was present for the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Michelle Jamieson, seconded by Commissioner Ron Matheson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Michelle Jamieson, Vice-Mayor
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Ron Matheson, Commissioner
<b>AYES:</b>	Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

**I. CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Michelle Jamieson, seconded by Commissioner Ron Matheson to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Michelle Jamieson, Vice-Mayor
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Ron Matheson, Commissioner
<b>AYES:</b>	Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

A. Request for Approval of Minutes of January 12, 2026 Commission Meeting

**REPORTS**

Commissioner Matheson thanked City Employees that worked around the clock to make it safe for everyone.

Commissioner Matheson reported he attended Friends of the Ritz quarterly meeting last week, toured the water works plant, attended the Main Street awards and the Darcy Lynn event at the Ritz was a sell out and was a great performance.

Vice Mayor Jamieson thanked all employees out working this weekend and keeping everyone safe.

Commissioner Carter reported he attended the Chamber meeting last week and they have a new board member Madison Hopkins representing North Georgia Tech. Commissioner Carter stated the Chamber of Commerce hosts Stephens County Day at the Capital and that will be on March 12th; the Chamber Golf Classic fundraiser will be May 12th, tomorrow at Pings will be the Community Network lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Commissioner Carter stated the School Board had reported on May 19th they will float an E-SPLOST Referendum.

Commissioner Carter stated it has been in the paper and media, the Chamber Director's resignation and he would like to thank Julie on behalf of the City for the job she has done, for her partnership with Main Street.

Commissioner Fry thanked the City Employees for keeping us safe during the storm. Thanked Public Works for working hard for the citizens.

Mayor Hellenga reported he attended the Airport Authority meeting, a Development Authority meeting and a Humane Shelter meeting. The Commission Board had an opportunity to visit the Water Treatment facility on Black Mountain. It was a very informative visit and we saw the shape the facility is in and we need to get a plan.

Mayor Hellenga thanked Public Works, Fire Department and Police Department for keeping us safe through the storm, he is grateful and thankful for dedicated employees.

## **II. OLD BUSINESS**

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **B. Consideration of Bond Agreement for the Ritz Expansion**

Andrew Tritt with Stifel Nicolaus Company stated his company works with Cities, Counties and Authorities across the state working on debt financing. Mr. Tritt stated for quite a while he has been working with City staff, City Commission and the DDA to come up with a plan that executed a financing that was advantageous from both an interest rate perspective and affordability perspective. We went through a bid process to structure a bond issue that is the obligation of the City of Toccoa; it is issued through the Downtown Development Authority. The city can contract with another entity to issue a revenue bond. Mr. Tritt stated we went through the bid process to select a favorable rate; we sent it to 16 financial institutes, we had a response from five. Mr. Tritt stated they evaluated the five responses with the lowest interest rate and favorable terms. Regions Bank was the most favorable term with 3.65% and a fixed rate to 2036. The city has the ability to prepay or refinance with no penalty until August 2031. Mr. Tritt stated all the information and all particulars of the bond issue are put together in a bond resolution and intergovernmental agreement. We are asking for your

approval of the bond resolution as presented to take from today through closing, there will be a bond validation that is required due to State law. Mr. Tritt stated what this is, is a \$2,185,000.00 revenue bond for the Ritz Theatre Project.

Commissioner Carter thanked Mr. Tritt and Brian Husky for the work they did getting the bond bids out for us; and Jay Doss and our Bond Attorney who have reviewed all the documents as well as staff and their efforts.

Vice Mayor questioned about the contents on page 3, paragraph 3 regarding the signing over property to the Authority. Commissioner Jamieson asked when have we had a meeting that said we would sell the Ritz property. If we are transferring the deed we are selling the property and then it says we will buy it back or they will sell it back to us that is what we are doing if we sign this bond resolution.

Commissioner Carter stated to issue a bond they would need to have ownership, this is part of the mechanism to issue bonds and drafted in the documents, during the term of the bond the property would be in the Downtown Development Authority name and immediately after the last payment it would be deeded immediately back to the City.

Commissioner Fry stated the Downtown Development Authority is an organ of the City and is appointed by the City; it makes them a City entity.

After no further discussion the Mayor called for a vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Matheson to move forward with the Bond Agreement as submitted. Motion carried 3-1; Commissioner Jamieson opposed; Mayor Hellenga abstained.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [3 TO 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Terry Carter, Commissioner
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Ron Matheson, Commissioner
<b>AYES:</b>	Matheson, Carter, Fry
<b>NAYS:</b>	Jamieson
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Hellenga

C. Consideration of Alcohol Beverage Control Board Recommendations Concerning Underage Sales

A motion was made by Commissioner Fry, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the recommendation of the Alcohol Beverage Control Board to impose a fine of \$750 and license suspension of 10 days. Motion carried unanimously.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Gail Fry, Commissioner
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Terry Carter, Commissioner
<b>AYES:</b>	Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

D. Consideration of Alcohol Beverage License

A motion was made by Commissioner Fry, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the Alcohol license for Falls Road Convenience Store. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fry, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the Alcohol license for Sanjh, LLC. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Gail Fry, Commissioner  
**SECONDER:** Terry Carter, Commissioner  
**AYES:** Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

E. Consideration of City Owned Surplus Property Located on South Pond Street and Branch Street

A motion was made by Commissioner Fry, seconded by Vice Mayor Jamieson to approve the surplus property at South Pond and Branch Street and staff move forward with making parcels available to Habitat for Humanity. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Gail Fry, Commissioner  
**SECONDER:** Michelle Jamieson, Vice-Mayor  
**AYES:** Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

F. Consideration to Reserve the FY26 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Funds

A motion was made by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Vice Mayor Jamieson to bank FY26 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) funds \$186,422 and combine with FY24 and FY25 and SPLOST funds for a larger paving project and continue to use KCI for assistance with paving projects. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Terry Carter, Commissioner  
**SECONDER:** Michelle Jamieson, Vice-Mayor  
**AYES:** Hellenga, Jamieson, Matheson, Carter, Fry

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Recognition of Visitors Wishing to Speak on General Items. (Limit 3 Minutes)

Mr. Bill Stephens - 49 Hilltop Way, Toccoa.

Mr. Stephens discussed his water bill stating it was a mess. He gets ECap Money, Federal heat assistance.

He stated you cannot use Federal money for trash and sewer. He has a credit but stated he owes the City.

He asked for the Commissioners to look into getting the bills changed to be corrected.

**V. ADJOURN**

Mayor Hellenga adjourned the meeting at 5:37 p.m.



*Evan T. Hellenga*  
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 Mayor  
*Dawn Fisher*  
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 City Clerk