CITY OF KINGSTON
30 West Main St., Kingston, GA 30145
WORK SESSION MINUTES – CITY HALL
October 5, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Call Meeting to Order: Mayor Michael McFarland called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. In attendance were council members, Kathleen Posey, Patresha Northgraves, Mayor Michael McFarland, Reggie Applin, Payton Silvers (absent) Kelly Ensley, City Clerk, Grayson Brown, Treasurer, Police Chief TJ Sosebee, Sargent Jonathan Cordell, Officer Fredrick Evans, Charlie Pecchio, Finance Committee There were forty one (41) attendees.

Presentation: Thor representative Peter Magnini spoke
- Site: 563 acres east of Kingston downtown; initial DRI submitted to county for one 360,000 sq ft building.
- Project scale: developer cited ~$1B investment and projected ~$2M/yr in tax revenue to the city (preliminary figures).
- Developer noted modern data centers use closed-loop cooling (water fill equivalent roughly to an Olympic pool) and emphasized noise mitigation via large buffers and site planning.
- Current step: rezoning consideration; site-specific engineering and special permits would come later.
- Moratorium on connecting new water customers on Highway 293 remains in force due to pressure and capacity limits.
- Council discussed renewal length: last renewal was 180 days, attorney previously indicated possible extensions (council noted attorney said up to two years may be possible). Legal confirmation required.

Sign in to Speak: Marty Mulinix spoke for the Women's History Museum about changing the phone and internet with the City. Kelly Ensley, City Clerk stated she was awaiting for Comcast to contact.

Old Business:

1. Read meeting minutes for August 31, 2026 work session; no changes
2. Read meeting minutes for September 14, 2026 Council meeting; no changes

New Business:

3. Finance committee Report
   - Property taxes for the year have been implemented; initial expectation was first deposits in December, but finance staff noted deposits may arrive within 10 days (improved timing).
   - Anticipated cashflow gap may require bridge financing until tax receipts clear.
   - Next-year budget pressures: projected higher expenses than current year; staff will pursue grants and use small local allocations (SPLOST-like) as matching funds (example: a $50k allocation to pursue a typical grant matching opportunity).

4. Maintenance Report
   - No maintenance updates

5. Police Report
   - No Police Reports

6. Community Development
   - County fire station:
   - The county will construct a new fire station (county-operated) on the Railroad Y site; construction estimated to begin January.
   - The plan includes a property swap with the city and site improvements around the station.
   - Sewage treatment plant:
   - Groundbreaking reported; construction estimated ~17 months to build, with ~2–2.5 years before plant is operational for treatment.
   - Historic Y area:
   - County intends to preserve and enhance historic elements: revised walking trail (railroad motif), a reviewing stand, relocation of two monuments, and a new playground.
   - Accessibility for the new playground was flagged; staff will confirm accessibility details with county representatives.

7. Sweitzer Engineering to give a report on water rate recommendation; water tank and upgrades to the Railroad Street well house
   - Consultant presented a detailed study commissioned in April, emphasizing the utility has been losing money annually and needs rate changes to avoid insolvency.
   - Recommended changes to break even in 2027:
   - Raise monthly minimum (inside city) to $10 and (outside) to $15.
   - Increase volume charge to $5.70 per 1,000 gallons (about +35%).
   - Apply the EPD-mandated water conservation surcharge to all customers (previously exempted some high users).
   - Raise tap/connection fees to reflect true connection costs; require applicants to hire contractors where road crossings or complex taps make municipal work unprofitable.
   - Meter deposits recommended to remain in the ordinance, with an administrative note that practice currently has $200 for renters and $100 for property owners (Kelly corrected the prior assumption).
   - Consultant stated last ordinance changes span 2018–2021/2022/2020 in comments (dates discussed were inconsistent); council should confirm the official last-rate ordinance date before adoption.
   - Urgent adoption window: recommended to adopt rate changes so they are effective no later than Feb 1, 2027 (earlier adoption preferred).
   - Distribution system, wells, and tank work
   - Railroad Street well/tank is the primary supply; Dawson Street well casing failed (speculated seismic activity) and was taken out of service, significantly reducing redundancy.
   - Tank maintenance: consultant recommended stripping/painting the existing tank rather than building a new one (new tank would be much more expensive, require land acquisition and higher elevation).
   - Tank work timing: prefer cool-weather window (approx Oct–Dec); tank downtime could be 1–2 months or longer if weather delays painting.
   - Sequence/constraints:
   - Must ensure both Bartow County interconnections are operational and controllable before

taking the tank or well out of service.
- Repair or reactivate the emergency/temporary valve feeding 293 (previous USDA-installed connection) to reduce pressure/load on Railroad Street during outages; consultant estimated ~$20,000/yr purchase cost while relying on Bartlett County supply.
- Ideally perform well repairs and tank maintenance concurrently to minimize duplicate periods of buying water.
- Longer-term need: build a second tank and additional well(s) when finances permit to remove single-point dependencies.

8. Review Council meeting and Work Session dates-No changes on dates

9. Discuss increasing garbage rates
   - Waste Pro will increase collection rates effective Nov 1; city proposes to implement corresponding residential rate increases effective Dec 1 to provide notice to residents.
   - Proposed inside-city: $24 for first can, $16 for second can.
   - Proposed outside-city: $26 for first can, $18 for second can.

10. Discuss approving Larry Posey or another member as an alternate for Zoning Board
    - Mr. Posey asked not to be considered; due to a conflict between Mrs. Posey being a Council member.

11. Discuss Moratorium renewal for new meters down Hwy 293 to Rome
    - Discuss with the city attorney to confirm the legally permissible duration for renewing the moratorium on adding new water customers on Highway 293 (clarify whether renewal can be for 180 days or up to two years) and report back to council with recommendation.
    Member.

COUNCIL COMMENTS
No comments

ADJOURNMENT
At 6:15 p.m. meeting was adjourned.

_____ _____

Mayor Michael McFarland Kelly Ensley, City Clerk

Assisted by Summary AI