



MINUTES
City of McDonough
Organizational City Council Meeting
McKibben Chambers City Hall
136 Keys Ferry Street
January 5, 2026
6:00 PM

The Organizational Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, January 5, 2026.

Mayor Kamali Varner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The City Clerk called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Kam Varner	Present
Councilmember Larry Blue	Present
Councilmember Jamal Burt	Present
Councilmember Xavier Johnson	(Arrived after roll call)
Councilmember Darryl Payton	Present
Councilmember Scott Reeves	Present
Councilmember Vanessa Thomas	Present

Others in attendance: Police Chief, Ken Noble; Fire Chief, David Williams; City Attorney, Emilia Walker; City Clerk, Christy Taylor; Human Resources Director, LaTangela Hill; Community & Economic Development Director, Sylvia Smith; Technology Services Director, Brian Linton; Assistant Finance Director, Deborah Upshaw; Budget Manager, Dana Strickland; Deputy City Clerk, Joani Clemons; and Open Records Officer, Kathy Story.

Councilmember Burt gave the Invocation; and Councilmember Blue led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Varner called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Councilmember Reeves made a motion to approve the Agenda, and Councilmember Burt seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

McDonough Municipal Court Chief Judge, the Honorable Andrea Boyd administered the oath of the Mayor to Mayor Kamali Varner.

Judge Boyd then administered the oath of Councilmember to District 1 Councilmember Xavier Johnson; Councilmember At Large Vanessa Thomas; and District 2 Councilmember Jamal Burt.

Mayor Varner called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as follows:
6A. Approval of the December 17, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Thomas made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and Councilmember Burt seconded. The vote was five in favor. Those voting in favor were Councilmember Blue, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Payton, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Mayor Varner and Councilmember Johnson did not vote.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Varner called for nominations for the election of Mayor Pro Tem. Councilmember Payton nominated Councilmember Burt; and Mayor Varner nominated Councilmember Reeves to serve as Mayor Pro Tem.

Mayor Varner called for a motion on the nomination of Councilmember Reeves. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to elect Councilmember Reeves Mayor Pro Tem, and Councilmember Reeves seconded. The vote was three in favor and four in opposition. The motion failed. Those voting in favor were Mayor Varner, Councilmember Johnson and Councilmember Reeves. Those voting in opposition were Councilmember Blue, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Payton, and Councilmember Thomas.

Mayor Varner called for a motion on the nomination of Councilmember Burt. Councilmember Thomas made a motion to elect Councilmember Burt to serve as Mayor Pro Tem, and Councilmember Payton seconded. The vote was six in favor and one in opposition. Those voting in favor were Mayor Varner, Councilmember Blue, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Payton, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Johnson voted in opposition.

Mayor Varner called for nominations for the Planning Commission (PC), as follows:
Councilmember Blue appointed Stanley Head to the Planning Commission.
Councilmember Thomas appointed LaTonya Hawkins to the Planning Commission.
Councilmember Johnson will make his appointment at the January 20, 2026, City Council Meeting.
Councilmember Payton appointed Jerry Hayes to the Planning Commission.
Councilmember Reeves appointed Taira Castora to the Planning Commission.
Mayor Pro Tem Burt appointed Mark Thomas to the Planning Commission.
Mayor Varner appointed Fredrina McLaughlin to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Varner called for nominations for the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA), as follows:
Mayor Pro Tem Burt appointed Samuel Humphreys to BOZA.
Councilmember Reeves appointed Charles Piersaul to BOZA.
All other nominations for BOZA will be made at the January 20, 2026, City Council Meeting.

Mayor Varner called for a motion to go into Executive Session for Litigation O.C.G.A. 50-14-2; Real Estate O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(1); and Personnel O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(2). Mayor Pro Tem Burt made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purposes stated, and Councilmember Thomas seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mayor Varner called for a motion to reconvene Regular Session. Councilmember Thomas made a motion to reconvene, and Mayor Pro Tem Burt seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Varner, Mayor Pro Tem Burt, Councilmember Blue, Councilmember Payton, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Reeves was not present for the vote.

Mayor Pro Tem Burt made a motion to authorize Sylvia Smith to serve as the City's Interim Deputy City Administrator, in accordance with the City's policies and budget, until further notice of the Council, and Councilmember Johnson seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

There were no other action items reported from Executive Session.

After closing comments, Mayor Varner adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Christy L. Taylor, CMC
City Clerk

OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE NOTICE: This is a regularly scheduled meeting of Mayor and Council of the City of McDonough duly noticed pursuant to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq). Notice of the meeting schedule was published in the *Henry Herald* on November 22, 2025; and a copy the meeting schedule was posted at City Hall and on the City's website, as required by law.