

## **ROME CITY COMMISSION**

**Monday, January 26, 2026**

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Mayor Bojo presided with Mayor Pro Tem Robinson and Commissioners Brock, Beeman, Fisher, Hixon, Collins, and McDaniel present. Commissioner Cochran was out due to an illness and excused. Mayor Bojo opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag. Mayor Bojo made note of the recent loss of Mr. John Pillsbury. Mr. Pillsbury was a dedicated community volunteer, serving on many City boards and committees throughout the decades.

### **Minutes – January 12, 2026**

The Minutes of the January 12, 2026, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

### **Downtown Sidewalk Ordinance**

After he noted that the ordinance had been tabled at the January 12, 2026, City Commission meeting, Commissioner Robinson made a motion to remove this proposed ordinance from the table. Commissioner McDaniel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Commissioner Robinson moved to postpone the vote on the proposed downtown sidewalk ordinance until the March 9, 2026, City Commission meeting, and Commissioner Brock seconded.

Kelley Ledford, Director of Strategic Initiatives, addressed the Commission explaining that the Downtown Development Authority would like to have more time to receive input from the downtown merchants. All parties within the BID (Business Improvement District) are invited to the Downtown Development Authority meeting scheduled for February 26, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in the Milner Building. Ms. Ledford also explained that the City is transitioning from a sidewalk *café* ordinance to a sidewalk ordinance, which would affect more businesses than just restaurants. City of Rome Public Works Director Chris Jenkins will also be at the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to address questions concerning City of Rome's right of way.

With the presentation concluded, Commissioner Robinson's motion to postpone this item until March 9, 2026, was unanimously approved.

### **Z26-01-05 Rezone 225 Huffaker Road**

Rome/Floyd Planning Director Brice Wood introduced and reviewed rezoning file Z26-01-05, the request to rezone property located at 225 Huffaker Road and identified by Floyd County tax map number H13X-127, from Suburban Residential to Multi-family Residential. Mr. Wood noted that the Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this request with the condition that the planned residential units either face the road or are placed perpendicular to the road (Huffaker Road). The submitted site plan indicates that the units would be placed in such a manner to meet the condition.

Mayor Bojo called a public hearing to order concerning this request. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner McDaniel moved to approve the rezoning request for 225 Huffaker Road, from Suburban Residential to Multi-family Residential with the condition that any residential units placed on this property either face Huffaker Road or be perpendicular to Huffaker Road. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Convenience Store and Gas Station Development Standards Ordinance**

Rome/Floyd Planning Director Brice Wood presented and reviewed the proposed convenience store and gas station development standards ordinance. These standards are in the form of an amendment to the Rome/Floyd Unified Land Development Code. Currently, there is both a City and County moratorium preventing the development of new convenience stores or gas stations unless the permit for the development was acquired prior to the implementation of the moratorium.

Mayor Bojo called a public hearing to order concerning this proposed ordinance. Speaking in favor of the ordinance was Ms. Angela Rubino, Floyd County, GA. Ms. Rubino read a brief statement outlining her support for this measure, which would potentially limit the number of new convenience stores and gas stations moving forward. She encouraged the City Commission to value quality of developments over quantity of developments. Furthermore, she referenced the high number of convenience stores and gas stations that currently exist in our community. Ms. Rubino thanked Planning Director Brice Wood for his efforts in developing this ordinance.

Speaking in opposition to the proposed ordinance was Mr. Fisher Law, Floyd County, GA. Mr. Law represents several developers of convenience stores and gas stations. During Mr. Law's address to the Commission, he referenced a letter submitted to the Planning Commission dated November 6, 2025. Mr. Law took time to express his appreciation to Mr. Wood for listening to his suggestions and making amendments to the ordinance which is now before the Commission. However, Mr. Law reminded the Commission that some of his clients have purchased property and invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in planning to construct a gas station. These gas stations may not be allowed under the new regulations. He asked the City Commission to not adopt this ordinance tonight but rather declare the moratorium suspended for at least a one-week period, to give developers the opportunity to acquire their building permits and develop their properties under the existing regulations. With there being no further comments, Mayor Bojo closed the public hearing.

There was considerable discussion among the Commission regarding this matter. During the discussion, Mr. Wood stated there are currently at least five proposed new gas stations in the City and nine proposed locations in the County that have indicated they would like to move forward with development under the existing regulations. Mr. Wood again reminded the Commission that Rome and Floyd County have a higher number of convenience stores and gas stations per capita than the State or National average.

The Commissioners had some questions for Mr. Law, during which time Mr. Law reminded the Commission that COAMs (coin operated amusement machines) are not restricted to convenience stores or gas stations. COAMs can go in virtually any retail establishment. Mr. Law added that under the new Georgia Lottery corporation regulations, the new "card" system will help prevent illegal cash payouts that have occurred at some establishments. Mr. Law said that this new process may cause some of the smaller stores to not stay in business. Commissioner McDaniel spoke at length regarding this topic, adding that the Georgia Lottery and the Georgia Legislature have been little to no help regarding the regulation of COAMs. Georgia regulations allow local governments very few enforcement provisions,

however the City of Rome is attempting to enforce those allowed provisions. With the discussion concluded, Commissioner Robinson moved to approve this ordinance as submitted. Commissioner McDaniel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Readopt ULDC and Zoning Maps**

Rome/Floyd Planning Director Brice Wood stated that it is time for the City of Rome and Floyd County to readopt the Unified Land Development Code and Zoning Maps. While code and zoning amendments are already in effect, each government typically readopts the ordinance and the zoning map each year with the previous year’s revisions included.

Mayor Bojo called a public hearing to order concerning this matter. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner McDaniel moved to readopt the ULDC and Zoning Maps. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**City Manager Vehicle – Georgia Decal Exemption**

Secretary Smith explained that in order to exempt the City Manager’s vehicle from the State of Georgia decal requirement, the City Commission must conduct a public hearing each year and adopt a resolution effecting that exemption. A public hearing has been advertised for tonight’s meeting, and the resolution was included with the City Commission agenda.

Mayor Bojo called a public hearing to order. There was no one to speak in favor of the resolution and Ms. Tammi Lob, 5 Parkway Dr. SE, Rome, addressed the Commission. Ms. Lob had questions understanding the purpose of this proposal. After more information was provided, she expressed her opposition to exempting this one City of Rome vehicle from this decal requirement. The City of Rome owns many vehicles, all of which contain a city logo decal except for some police vehicles that are exempted through state law. With the public comments concluded, Mayor Bojo closed the public hearing. There was some discussion amongst the Commissioners regarding this exemption. This state decal requirement has been in place for many years, and the City of Rome has exempted the City Manager’s vehicle from the decal requirement each year. This requirement predates City Manager Rich.

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt the resolution exempting the City Manager’s vehicle from the Georgia Decal requirement and Commissioner McDaniel seconded. The motion was approved by the following vote:

- YES: Robinson, Beeman, Fisher, Hixon, Collins, and McDaniel**
- NO: Brock**

**Recent Winter Weather**

City Manager Rich took a moment to thank the City Employees for their performance during the recent threat of freezing rain in our area. While Rome and Floyd County were spared from noticeable freezing rain, City of Rome employees performed exemplary in the very cold temperatures. Specifically, he thanked the Police and Fire Departments, Public Works Department, and Solid Waste and Water Departments for their efforts.

**Joint Services Committee**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Joint Services Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at the Floyd County Administration Building.

**Rome City Commission Planning Retreat**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Rome City Commission will meet for an annual Planning Retreat on Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the Forum River Center.

**Memorandum of Understanding – Garrard Park**

The subject of a memorandum of understanding between the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority and the City of Rome concerning the construction of Garrard Park was reviewed in Caucus prior to tonight’s meeting. It was noted that the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority has been awarded funds (\$1,573,680) from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for improving neighborhood outcomes in disproportionately impacted communities. This agreement would obligate the City of Rome to contribute up to \$160,000 in addition to the ARPA funds for the construction of a park facility on the former GE site. Specifically, this park will be on Redmond Road near the entrance to the GE trail system.

Commissioner Robinson moved for the approval of the memorandum of understanding and Commissioner Collins seconded. There was some discussion regarding this matter. Specifically, Commissioner Beeman noted that persons headed to this park would likely have difficulty crossing Redmond Road as there are limited crossing opportunities.

The motion to adopt this agreement was unanimously in favor.

**Ride Forward Program**

Commissioner Beeman moved to approve funding for the Ride Forward Program with the Rome Transit Department. The City of Rome is proposing to use up to \$10,000 from the Opioid Settlement Funds to help fund this program. This program provides deeply discounted or no cost passes to organizations. These organizations must serve low-income vulnerable populations that are using a transit system for specific purposes.

Commissioner Beeman moved to approve this funding. Commissioner Fisher seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Development Oversight Committee**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Development Oversight Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Floyd County Administration Building.

**Water and Sewer Committee**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee will meet on Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

**Tourism**

Commissioner Brock announced that the Tourism Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 a.m. at the Civic Center.

**Martin Luther King Jr Celebration**

Commissioner Beeman thanked City Manager Rich and all City Employees who were involved in helping make the Martin Luther King Jr. four-day celebration in our community a success.

Commissioner Collins noted that the 2026 event drew one of the largest crowds in Rome’s MLK Jr. celebration history. Commissioner Collins also stated that he wished he could have been able to march with Dr. King and his supporters during the 1960’s.

**Rome/Floyd Planning Commission**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Rome/Floyd Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission**

Commissioner Collins stated that the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission remains active and that information from their planning retreat will be forthcoming.

**Logan Cochran – National Honor Society**

Mayor Bojo congratulated Commissioner Cochran’s’ son Logan for his recent induction into the National Honor Society.

**2026 Committee Assignments**

Mayor Bojo announced that the 2026 committee assignments have been distributed and that the new committee assignments will become effective February 1, 2026.

**Adjourn**

With there being no further business, Mayor Bojo adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith  
City Clerk