

Dublin City Hall
October 1, 2025

A special-called meeting of the Mayor and Council was held at Dublin City Hall, on Thursday, October 1st, 2025, at 11:51 A.M.

Mayor Joshua Kight called the meeting to order. Council members Bill Brown, Tess Godfrey, Sara Kolbie, Paul Griggs, Chris Smith, and Richard Mascaro were present. Council member Bennie Jones was absent from the meeting. The invocation was given by Richard Mascaro, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor recommended not going into executive session to discuss the personnel matter since no termination or conversation related to termination was needed. An Appointee of the Mayor and Council had already submitted a resignation to the Mayor, which he accepted.

No motion was made.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON RESOLUTION #25-47 TO APPOINT INTERIM CITY CLERK

Mayor commented on transparency in this situation. Monday afternoon, a telephone call was received from Special Agent Lindsey Wilkes of the GBI, Region 12, located in Eastman Georgia. Wilkes notified City Manager Powell that there was an investigation of our former City Clerk Heather Browning based on a referral from the Laurens County Sheriff's Office regarding financial issues related to her work as treasurer at Cedar Grove Methodist Church. City Manager Powell immediately reported this to Mayor Kight and City Treasurer Blake Daniels that this investigation was underway and immediately began reviewing of any risk to the City of Dublin in case our City Clerk has done anything improper here. Within a few hours, City Manager Powell received additional information that cause existed to seek an arrest warrant for Heather Browning related to her actions at her church. At that time, all access to the building, computer systems, and email systems was terminated. Heather Browning came to City Hall and offered to resign. She signed her resignation and was accepted at that time on behalf of the City effective Monday, September 29, 2025. Mayor Kight stated at this time, we will need to appoint an interim City Clerk because of the certain duties that are required for the City of Dublin to function. This interim City Clerk would serve until the council members can make a determination on how we want to move forward with the city clerk. For full transparency, Mayor Kight wanted to take this moment to provide the public with the controls that the City of Dublin has over the City's money. There are three processes that we have in place for ways that city employees can have for access to City's money. Mayor Kight explained the process of how checks and ACHs are issued, bank account transfers, and through cash drawers. Mayor Kight made clear that

documentation from the vendors or for the product needed have to be submitted for a requisition to be sent to a first level approval. The first level of approval is normally the department head to generate a purchase order. If the amount is \$1,000.00 or less, you only need the documentation from the vendor and the department head approval. At that point it creates a purchase order through the purchasing department. The purchasing department will provide product or work vendor and send an invoice to accounts payable. Account payable verifies that the product and/or work is received. Then it creates a check run. A check run is the payment given to vendor for services provided. That check run is personally approved by the city treasurer, Blake Daniels, and city manager, Josh Powell. If approved, the accounts payable will print checks and a list of approved checks will be sent to bank. Banks will not honor checks unless they are on that check list. The list of check runs get sent to our council members on each meeting. If the amount is over \$1,000.00, the purchase order will only be approved by our City Manager Powell. Anything over \$15,000.00 comes to our council meetings for Mayor Kight and council members approve. Mayor Kight went over the exposure for City Clerk Heather Browning to see if we find anything improper. Her first level approval are through Riverview Golf Course, Customer Service related with Natural Gas, and Qualifying/Election. The City treasurer is currently looking through all first level. Everything had to have documentation from the vendors from requestor. Everything has been going through Jaime Carter to be approved first level by her. As of this meeting, nothing has come about inappropriate. Once all accounts are reviewed, we will make it known to the council members to make sure accounts have been reviewed. Account transfers between bank accounts. City Clerk had no access to bank account. City bank accounts only transfer from City of Dublin accounts. Every account transfer must be approved through city treasurer and city manager. Another way Heather Browning has access to was through reimbursement requests. The city treasurer has reviewed. All reimbursement requests had approved documentation. The last way the city clerk had access to was through cash drawers. Cash drawers are to be balanced each day by whomever is on shift. The amount of money must match cash receipts. If the deposit does not balance, it is investigated by the city treasurer. Cameras are also on each cash drawer at every department where any cash were operated. There was a few months the city clerk was responsible in taking cash after balancing at the Riverview Golf Course for their deposit. There were no discrepancies on these accounts. It does appear at this point that her actions related to her church only where she was the only signer on that particular bank account. If we receive any information outside of that we will let public know.

No questions at this time.

Councilman Bill brown commented thanking for jumping on this as swiftly and being transparent with the public.

Councilman Chris Smith commented about Heather Browning's credit card use, this was balanced out.

At this time, Mayor Kight says we can have a motion related to appointment of an interim City Clerk.

A motion was made by Councilman Bill Brown and seconded by Councilman Paul Griggs to make City Treasurer Blake Daniels to be the interim City Clerk.

Discussion on duties and roles from Council Member Sara Kolbie for the interim City Clerk. City Manager Josh Powell responded that the city clerk was responsible of record keeping, attesting city contracts, and keeping up with the official minutes of the council meetings.

Council Member Tess Godfrey asked on how long interim City Clerk will be taking this job and if the job has been posted. City Manager Josh Powell stated that there needs to be a personnel meeting to be structured on the position. The motion carried 6/0 to approve.

There were no other agenda items.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO THE INTERIM CITY CLERK

Staff Attorney, Jacob Poole, administered the Oath of Office to Interim City clerk Robert Blake Daniels. Interim City Clerk Robert Blake Daniels thanked Mayor and Council.

City Manager Josh Powell asked for guidance from the council members about severance pay per an employment contract with Heather Browning. She has accrued annual leave pay out of 280 hours. Regardless of the circumstances of their departure, former employees did get their annual leave pay out. Mayor wanted advice from the city employment law attorney and have an executive session related to this decision for another council meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments

COUNCIL COMMENTS

City Treasurer/Interim City Clerk Daniels had no comment.

Councilman Bill Brown thanks for jumping on this problem and being full transparent to public and quickly resolving this. Special thanks for Blake Daniels on stepping up in this position.

Council member Tess Godfrey thanks Blake Daniels for stepping up and asking for prayers for Heather Browning

Council member Sara Kolbie thanks Blake and having this transparent conversation about the process of the funds.

Councilman Paul Griggs thanks Blake Daniels for stepping up.

Councilman Chris Smith lets everyone know about the Council Meeting we have on October 2, 2025, alongside with the Oconee Gym Ribbon Cutting at 5:30pm. To him personally, she was a great employee with the City of Dublin.

Councilman Richard Mascaro says Heather Browning was a great employee. Unfortunately, she made a bad decision and for us as council members, we must be careful dealing with taxpayers money and with that we must represent our community with best interest.

City Manager Josh Powell expresses that it is disappointing on someone you work close with lets you down a little bit. He is praying for Heather, the family, and church that is a victim in this. He held a meeting with department head on our responsibilities in public service and need to be up front and transparent. He reiterates the importance of integrity for everyone from supervisor down to the employee. Thanks the council for their role.

Mayor Kight states he is praying for Heather, the family, and church that is a victim in this. Every organization will face challenges. Question is how do you respond to it? Do you own it? Do you try to make it better going forward? We are taking this opportunity to review our processes, protocols, and earning the public's trust and protecting their funds. We think it is important to come out of this as a better city.

ADJORNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kight adjourned the meeting at 12:21pm.


Joshua E. Kight, Mayor

ATTEST:


R. Blake Daniels, Interim City Clerk

