

City of Woodland

Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2025

I. Call to Order

Mayor James Carter called to order the regular meeting of the Woodland City Council at 6:15 PM on May 12, 2025, at the Woodland City Hall.

II. Roll Call

The following persons were in attendance: Mayor James Carter, Mayor Pro Tem T. L. Carter, Councilwoman Allison Owens, Councilman John Haralson, Councilman Jeffery Mitchell, City Clerk Allissa Gresham, Municipal Clerk Cynthia Powell, and City Attorney Gary Byrd.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilman Haralson made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

The April 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes were distributed.

Councilwoman Owens made a motion to approve the April 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. Councilman Haralson seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

V. Guest Speakers:

- a) **Sheriff Bobby Gates, Jr.**, the Talbot County Sheriff and Chief Deputy Sanders, discussed their commitment to public safety and willingness to support the City of Woodland. Sheriff Gates stated he has a limited staff and budget. He stated his deputies are divided between the north and south ends of the county. He stated he patrols himself during day and night shifts, and deputies are instructed to patrol through Woodland before proceeding to other areas. He stated the department's priority was to protect local businesses like Dollar General at night, unless responding to an emergency call. Sheriff Gates encouraged the City of Woodland to have open communication and report any concerns. He stated that he or Chief Deputy Sanders would attend Council Meetings or make personal visits if needed. Chief Deputy Sanders stated she was new to Talbot County and was learning the area. She stated she patrols in an unmarked vehicle. And walks through neighborhoods to stay visible and informed. She provided the City of Woodland with her direct phone number and encouraged the Council and citizens to reach out to her with any concerns or issues. Attorney Byrd discussed the August 2024 City of Woodland theft of services, stating the Talbot County Magistrate judge wanted the Sheriff's Department to handle issuing a warrant and he had sent all the necessary paperwork regarding the case to Sheriff Gates several months earlier, Sheriff Gates stated he reviewed the documentation but was reluctant to pursue charges due to the case originating under the previous administration. He stated the departure of the original investigating officer and a lack of clarity regarding the case's history made him hesitant. Sheriff Gates stated the City could apply for a warrant through the Talbot County Magistrate Court, and his office would be willing to serve it once issued. Attorney Byrd stated he contacted the Talbot County Clerk of Probate and was waiting to hear back from her if she would allow the City to apply

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for a warrant. Councilwoman Owens suggested the City move forward and apply for a warrant in order to avoid any further delay of the case. The Council agreed to take the necessary steps to have a warrant issued and have the Sheriff's Department serve the warrant.

- b) **Leigh Ann Erenheim**, the Director of the Talbot County Emergency Management Agency, discussed Talbot County had secured a FEMA Grant to install ten emergency weather sirens in the most populated areas of the county. She stated one of these sirens will be installed at the Woodland Volunteer Fire Department. Mrs. Erenheim stated that the new siren system is integrated with National Weather Service alerts and will operate automatically without manual activation. She explained that this upgrade, along with existing Code Red alerts, would improve emergency communication, especially during outdoor activities or during daytime hours.

VI. Attorney Report

- a) Attorney Byrd stated he contacted the Talbot County Magistrate Court judge on October 11, 2024, to discuss the August 2024 City of Woodland theft of services report. He stated the Magistrate Court was closed for the Columbus Day holiday. He stated Clerk Powell was holding the report for corrections to be made by the HWR Water Solutions employee. Attorney Byrd stated on November 15, 2024, Clerk Powell emailed him the corrected report from the HWR employee. He stated the email from Clerk Powell went into his junk email folder and was not printed until December 09, 2024. Attorney Byrd stated he contacted the Magistrate Court judge in November 2024, and she stated he should contact the Talbot County deputy and have him present his report to the Magistrate Court judge to issue a warrant for theft of services. Attorney Byrd stated he tried contacting the Talbot County deputy, but the deputy never returned his phone call. Attorney Byrd stated he tried contacting Sheriff Gates, but he never received a return call. Attorney Byrd stated he had met with Sheriff Gates on Thursday, February 06, 2025, about this matter. Attorney Byrd emailed Sheriff Gates the incident report on Friday, February 07, 2025. Sheriff Gates stated he would be moving forward with the case. Attorney Byrd stated he had not received further information but that he would continue to engage with Sheriff Gates. Attorney Byrd stated he discussed the case with Sheriff Gates at the courthouse on May 1, 2025. Attorney Byrd stated this matter was discussed previously by guest speaker Sheriff Bobby Gates, Jr.
- b) Attorney Byrd stated Talbot County Assistant Manager Ronnie Hendricks came to City Hall last month and told Clerk Gresham the County had just received the certified letter sent in January about cleaning up the old Adams Funeral Home property that the County owns. Attorney Byrd attempted to contact Mr. Hendricks and left a voicemail, but as of tonight's meeting, he had not received a return phone call. Attorney Byrd stated he had turned this matter over to the Code Enforcer.
- c) Attorney Byrd stated Clerk Gresham contacted him about citizen concerns about trees that had fallen on private property due to the May 3, 2025, tornado that came through part of the City of Woodland. Attorney Byrd stated he advised Clerk Gresham that any trees falling from the City property to private property are the private property owner's responsibility unless the City knew or should have known there was a hazard, such as a leaning trunk or broken limb.

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- d) Councilman Haralson requested that Attorney Byrd provide further explanation regarding the "File Start-Up Fee, File Maintenance, and Insurance" items listed on his monthly invoice to the City of Woodland. Attorney Byrd explained that these charges help cover the cost of maintaining a storage facility for archived case files, as well as his professional liability insurance.
- e) Attorney Byrd presented Clerk Gresham with the monthly invoice for services.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter made a motion to accept the Attorney Report. Councilman Haralson seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

VII. Water Report

- a) Jeff Harrison of HWR Water Solutions stated the City of Woodland produced 1.19 million gallons of water and billed out 618,968 gallons of water. He stated there was 567,332 gallons of water loss.
- b) Jeff stated HWR repaired an old galvanized line on Pleasant Hill Street.
- c) Jeff discussed that the City of Woodland CDBG Project was nearing completion, and the Council would need to decide on how to use the leftover funds.
- d) Clerk Powell distributed the Water System Totals Report and the Delinquent Account Report for April 2025. The water report shows the total billed was \$7,830.85, and the total received was \$8,019.85
- e) Mayor Carter discussed the past due water list. Clerk Powell stated water service had been cut off to the residences listed on the past due list. Councilwoman Owens discussed residents leaving the City without paying outstanding amounts. Jeff suggested the City charge a larger amount for a water service deposit. The Council suggested Clerk Gresham add discussing revising the water service deposit to the June 09, 2025, regular Council Meeting Agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter made a motion to accept the water report. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

VIII. Clerk Report

- a) Clerk Gresham discussed the new flagpoles and USA flags would need to be hung along Hwy 41 and Hwy 36 within the coming week for the Memorial Day Holiday. She stated the Maintenance Department would need some help with this project. Mayor Pro Tem Carter stated he would help with the project.
- b) Clerk Gresham discussed the quote of \$4,450.00 from Erenheim Tree Service, Inc. for tree removal and stump grinding at the City of Woodland Community Park. She stated the project cost could be split equally between the Community Park Fund and the General Fund. Councilwoman Owens made a motion to approve the \$4450.00 quote to hire Erenheim Tree

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Service, Inc. for the project, with funding to be divided equally between the two mentioned funds. Councilman Haralson seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

- c) Clerk Gresham reminded the Mayor and Council of the May 19, 2025, River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Plan Meeting to be held at the City of Woodland Community Park at 5:00 PM.
- d) Clerk Gresham stated she distributed the City of Woodland Legal Notice for Property Maintenance to the Mayor and Council. She stated it would be published in the Talbotton New Era Newspaper for the next four weeks and was posted on the City of Woodland website and Facebook page. Councilwoman Owens suggested Clerk Gresham and Clerk Powell also compile a list of water customers and mail a notice out to each one of them. Clerk Gresham and Clerk Powell will work to get this done before the June 09, 2025, Council Meeting.
- e) Clerk Gresham stated she distributed a Customer Complaint Form for the Council to review. Councilwoman Owens stated that citizens needed to come before the Council as a whole instead of coming to City Hall and complaining to Clerk Gresham and Clerk Powell. She suggested that if a citizen fills out a complaint form, they still come to the next Regular Council Meeting to discuss the issue. Clerk Gresham will add a section to the form for the citizen to agree or decline to attend the next Regular Council Meeting to discuss the issue.
- f) Clerk Gresham stated she had distributed updated versions of the May, June, and July 2025 City of Woodland Holiday and Event Calendar to the Mayor and Council for review.
- g) Councilwoman Owens asked Clerk Gresham what Carsland in the Grounds Maintenance Department was currently working on. She discussed Carsland was not carrying out his duties as expected of a Grounds Maintenance person. Clerk Gresham suggested having Carsland attend the Regular Council Meetings to present the Council with a Grounds Maintenance Report. Councilwoman Owens suggested adding discussing the Grounds Maintenance position to the June 09, 2025, Regular Council Meeting. Clerk Gresham will inform Carsland that he is to attend the June 09, 2025, Regular Council Meeting.
- h) Clerk Gresham presented the month's financial reports.

Councilman Haralson made a motion to accept the Clerk Report. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

IX. Open Business

- a) Clerk Powell discussed the City purchasing an additional picnic table for the City of Woodland Community Park. Councilwoman Owens suggested holding off on the purchase of the picnic table and instead have Clerk Powell get bids to enclose the ceiling of the porches so the wood would not be exposed. Clerk Powell will get quotes for the ceiling enclosure and present them to the Council at the June 09, 2025, Regular Council Meeting.

X. New Business

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- a) Clerk Gresham discussed getting quotes for a new security camera system at City Hall. The Council suggested Clerk Gresham get quotes and present them at the June 09, 2025, Regular Council Meeting.

XI. Executive Session: No Executive Session was needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter made a motion to pay the bills. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

XII. Adjournment

Councilman Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Mayor James Carter adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM.

Minutes Submitted By: _____

Allissa Gresham

City Clerk

Approval Date