

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, January 12, 2026

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Commissioners Bojo, Brock, Cochran, Beeman, Collins, McDaniel and Robinson were present. Commissioner McDaniel opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Oath of Office – Ward 2 Commissioners

Floyd County Superior Court Judge Jack Niedrach was present to administer the Oath of Office to Commissioners Elaina Beeman, Jill Fisher, and Vic Hixon. Ms. Fisher and Mr. Hixon were elected to their first term in November 2025, and Commissioner Beeman was reelected to her second term.

Elect Mayor

City Attorney Andy Davis assumed the gavel for the process of electing the Rome City Mayor for 2025. Mr. Davis opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner McDaniel nominated Jim Bojo to serve as the City Commission Mayor for 2026, and Commissioner Robinson seconded. Commissioner Hixon nominated Commissioner Mark Cochran to serve as Mayor for 2026, and Commissioner Collins seconded. There were no other nominations. Mr. Bojo was elected to serve as the 2026 Mayor by the following vote:

**Bojo – McDaniel, Brock, Fisher, Robinson, and Bojo
Cochran – Beeman, Hixon, Collins, and Cochran**

Elect Mayor Pro Tem

Commissioner Bojo thanked the Commissioners for his selection as Mayor for 2026. He opened the floor for Mayor Pro Tem nominations. Commissioner Brock moved to nominate Wayne Robinson to serve as the Rome City Commission Mayor Pro Tem for 2026 and Commissioner McDaniel seconded. Commissioner Hixon nominated Elaina Beeman to serve as Mayor Pro Tem for 2026, and Commissioner Collins seconded. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Robinson was approved by the following vote:

**Robinson – Brock, Fisher, McDaniel, Bojo, and Robinson
Beeman – Cochran, Hixon, Collins, and Beeman**

Commissioner Robinson thanked his fellow Commissioners for allowing him to serve in this position. Commissioner McDaniel also thanked the Commissioners for allowing him to serve as Mayor in 2024 and 2025. McDaniel served previously for a one-year term as Mayor in 2021.

Commissioner Collins credited Commissioner Cochran for being the driving force behind Rome's "pothole brigade" and for negotiating the most recent Local Option Sales Tax Distribution Agreement with Floyd County. Collins also praised Commissioner Beeman for her efforts as a City Commissioner, former Board of Education member, and involved Rome citizen.

Commissioner Beeman said that the City Commission has to stand behind the chosen leaders, but she prays that the message sent at the 2025 election is heard. Beeman said that the voters wanted change, and for everyone to be taken care of, and there will not be “those, others, and them”, but has to be one community united. This leadership needs to step up and make a difference.

Minutes – December 15, 2025

The Minutes of the December 15, 2025, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Appoint City Manager

Commissioner Robinson moved to appoint Mr. Sammy Rich to serve as the Rome City Manager for 2026. Commissioner McDaniel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Rich thanked the entire commission for their support.

City Manager Appointments

City Manager Rich recommended that the following officials and authorizing agents, management staff, department directors, and other staff and operators be appointed for 2026:

I. Officials and Authorized Agents

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|---|--|
| 1) City Commission Clerk & Secretary | Joe Smith |
| 2) Assistant City Clerk & Secretary | Mark Green |
| 3) City Attorney | J. Anderson Davis |
| 4) Assistant City Attorney | Frank Beachem
Sam Lucas
Lee Carter |
| 5) Municipal Court Judge | Chris Jackson |
| 6) Assistant Municipal Court Judge | John Scott Husser |
| 7) City Physician | Atrium Health Floyd Employer Clinic |
| 8) Official Publication Organ | Rome News-Tribune |
| 9) Depositories & Investment Institutions: | |
| i. Bank OZK | |
| ii. Synovus | |
| iii. First National Community Bank | |
| iv. Regions Bank | |
| v. River City Bank | |
| vi. Truist Bank | |
| vii. United Community Bank | |
| viii. Wells Fargo | |
| ix. Local Government Investment Pool – State of Georgia | |
| x. East West Bank | |
| 10) Auditor | Mauldin & Jenkins
Certified Public Accountants, LLC |

II. Management Staff

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1) Assistant City Manager | Meredith Ulmer |
| 2) Assistant to the City Manager | Kelley Ledford |
| 3) Water & Sewer Division Director | John Boyd |
| 4) Finance Division Director | Toni Rhinehart |
| 5) Public Works Division Director/Traffic Engineer | Chris Jenkins |

III. Department Directors

- 1) Fire Chief – Troy Brock
- 2) Police Chief – Denise Downer – McKinney
- 3) Human Resources Director – Kristy Shepard
- 4) Community Development Director – Bekki Fox
- 5) City Clerk – Joe Smith
- 6) Solid Waste & Landfill Director – Tim Garrett
- 7) Purchasing Director – Becky Smyth
- 8) Building Official – James Martin
- 9) Cemetery Superintendent – Vacant
- 10) Street Department Director – Chad Hampton
- 11) Transit Director – Courtney Griffin
- 12) City Engineer/Engineering Services Director – Aaron Carroll
- 13) City Arborist – Ernest Watson
- 14) Water Treatment Facility Director – Wayne Stanley
- 15) Water Reclamation Facility Director – Jeff Hill
- 16) Water Billing Director – Bryan Parris
- 17) Water/Sewer Operations Director – Bryan Middleton
- 18) Office of Technology Services Director – Johnny Bunch
- 19) Downtown Development Director – Suzanne Roberts
- 20) Rome/Floyd County Planning Director – Brice Wood
- 21) Rome/Floyd E.C.O. Center/ Keep Rome-Floyd Beautiful Coordinator – Hannah Bagley
- 22) Rome/Floyd E.C.O Center Director – Ben Winkelman

IV. Other Staff & Operators

- 1) Greater Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director – Lisa Smith
- 2) Rome Tennis Center/Downtown Tennis Center – Cliff Dysdale Tennis
- 3) Stonebridge Golf Course – Troon/Indigo Sports

Commissioner Robinson moved to approve Mr. Rich's recommendations. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Weekend

Mr. Alvin Jackson, Sr., addressed the City Commission outlining the events planned for the four-day Martin Luther King Jr. weekend celebration in Rome. Events will take place on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and end on Monday with the annual Broad Street march and program held at the City Auditorium.

MLK Jr. Proclamation

Commissioner Beeman presented a proclamation to the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission recognizing the MLK celebration for 2026 and congratulating the commission for their efforts.

Isaiah Spurgeon – Rome Police Officer of the Year

Commissioner Brock presented a proclamation recognizing Officer Isaiah Spurgeon as the Rome Police Officer of the Year for 2025. Rome Police Chief Denise Downer – McKinney spoke regarding the outstanding performance of Officer Spurgeon during 2025. Of special note, was a lifesaving effort of an individual who was suffering a medical emergency, as well as lifesaving action involving a house fire at 220 Pennington Ave. In addition to being Officer of the Year, Officer Spurgeon was Officer of the Month for both September and December 2025.

CALEA Recertification Recognition

Rome Police Chief Denise Downer – McKinney announced to the Commission that the Rome Police Department had received recertification notification from CALEA (Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies). Rome has been a certified law enforcement agency for many years, and the most recent recertification effort has been recently approved.

Certificates of Appointment

Secretary Smith announced Certificates of Appointment for the following citizens:

- Alcohol Control Commission – Chris Carey
- Downtown Development Authority – Jankia Cooper, Keith Beauchamp, Eric Tant, and David Clonts
- Rome/Floyd Planning Commission – Randy Quick

Ms. Cooper, Mr. Beauchamp, and Mr. Clonts were present at tonight’s meeting.

Certificates of Appreciation

Secretary Smith reported that Certificates of Appreciation have been prepared for citizens who have concluded their service on city committees. These were:

- Alcohol Control Commission – Steve VanMeter
- Downtown Development Authority – Tayesha Lytle, Elaine Abercrombie, Kevin Dillmon, and Kelli Duncan
- Rome/Floyd Planning Commission – Vic Hixon (who rotated off of the Planning Commission due to his election to the City Commission)

Ms. Abercrombie was present at tonight’s meeting.

Angela Rubino – Georgia Municipal Association

Ms. Angela Rubino addressed the City Commission. Ms. Rubino stated that the demand for elected official accountability is growing. Ms. Rubino spoke specifically about the Georgia Municipal Association, stating that the City of Rome is voluntarily a member of GMA and that membership is not mandatory. She mentioned that OCGA 36-45-1 requires that newly elected commissioners attend mandated training, which is cosponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association.

She questioned why the City of Rome is spending taxpayer money for a membership in the Georgia Municipal Association and why City Commissioners are attending training at the taxpayers' expense above and beyond the requirement for newly elected training.

Ms. Rubino stated, it appears to her, that GMA is a “dark money operation”. Furthermore, she questioned, that based on comments that took place at the City of Rome’s Hometown Connection meeting with our local legislative delegation, why legislatures expect the Georgia Municipal Association to present legislation rather than legislation being drafted based on citizen needs. Ms. Rubino also questioned why Senator Colton Moore was not present at the Hometown Connection meeting. She questioned whether that was due to his sponsorship of Senate Bill 378.

Ron Swinford

Mr. Ron Swinford, 11 Poplar St., addressed the City Commission. Mr. Swinford cautioned the City Commission to always be aware that there are often unintended consequences of legislation, whether this legislation occurs at the national, state, or local level. Mr. Swinford added that some of the Rome City Commissions past decisions have had unintended consequences. He concluded his comments by stating that change is inevitable and change is currently happening.

Grant Miller

Mr. Grant Miller, 2637 Callier Springs Rd., briefly addressed the Commission. Mr. Miller thanked the Commission for stating that they would likely table the Downtown Sidewalk Ordinance tonight without action. This will give staff and Commissioners more time to receive public input concerning this proposed ordinance.

Bonny Askew – Rev. Chenier Alston

Mr. Bonny Askew addressed the City Commission and introduced Rev. Chenier Alston, the new pastor at Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. Alston was present along with his wife, Rayna, and their son. After reading his biographical information, Rev. Alston was introduced and briefly addressed the City Commission expressing his appreciation to now be a member of the Rome community. Rayna Alston also spoke.

Sunday Pouring Day - 2026

Secretary Smith reminded the Commission that the State of Georgia allows local governments to designate one Sunday per calendar year to allow establishments, who are not otherwise permitted to pour alcohol on Sunday (due to the state mandated food/drink ratio), to pour on Sunday.

The Alcohol Control Commission is recommending that Sunday, February 8, 2026 (Super Bowl Sunday), be the designated special pouring Sunday for 2026. There are no other holidays that fall on Sunday to compete with this choice for 2026.

Commissioner McDaniel moved to adopt the resolution authorizing Sunday, February 8, 2026, as the special pouring Sunday. Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Stonebridge Irrigation Project – Lease Purchase

City Manager Rich explained that the project for replacing the Stonebridge Golf Course irrigation system is underway. Originally, the City Commission had planned to pay for this project in the 2025 and 2026 Capital Budgets.

The project began in November 2025 and is expected to be completed by April 1, 2026. Mr. Rich further explained that half of the project was budgeted in the 2025 Capital Budget and that payment has been made, however Mr. Rich and Finance Director Toni Rhinehart have suggested that, rather than paying for the project in two lump sum amounts, that the City finance this project through a lease purchase agreement. Ms. Rhinehart has previously stated that this will help with the City's cashflow. Commissioner Robinson moved to adopt the resolution authorizing this lease purchase financing and Commissioner McDaniel seconded.

Commissioner Cochran suggested that, as discussed during Caucus at tonight's meeting, the City of Rome should add a surcharge to each round of golf, which would generate the additional funds needed for the lease purchase agreement. Based on the 2025 rounds of golf played at Stonebridge, that would equate to \$8.05 of additional charges per round to generate the lease purchase payment. There was considerable discussion by the City Commission regarding how Capital projects are funded. While Stonebridge continues to enjoy operational success positive net operating profits realized the past several years, there's not enough net profit to generate the funds needed for this Capital improvement. There was also discussion regarding the property taxes that are generated due to the Berry Forest and Fairways subdivisions that were developed along Stonebridge Golf Course. With the discussion concluded, Mr. Rich was instructed to consider viable alternatives for generating this lease purchase payment.

The motion to adopt the resolution was approved by the following vote:

YES: Robinson, Brock, Fisher, McDaniel, and Bojo
NO: Cochran, Beeman, Hixon, and Collins

Rezoning – First Reading

The following rezoning request was placed on first reading:

- a) Z26-01-05 – Request to rezone from Suburban Residential to Multi-family Residential for the property at 225 Huffaker Road Rome, Georgia 30165; Floyd County Tax Parcel H13X127. (Planning Commission recommends approval with conditions, 8-0).

A public hearing for this request will be held at the January 26th City Commission meeting.

Convenience Store and Gas Station Development Standards – First Reading

The proposed convenience store and gas station development standards, as drafted by the Planning Staff and recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission, is placed on first reading. A public hearing on this proposed ordinance amendment will take place at the January 26th City Commission meeting.

Readopt ULDC and Zoning Maps – First Reading

The annual action to readopt the Unified Land Development Code and Zoning Maps was placed on first reading. A public hearing regarding this matter will take place at the January 26th City Commission meeting.

Downtown Sidewalk Ordinance

The proposed Downtown Sidewalk Ordinance, which has been drafted to replace the existing Sidewalk Café Ordinance, is scheduled for first reading.

Commissioner Robinson moved to table this ordinance request and allow the Downtown Development Authority more time to receive input from the downtown merchants. Commissioner Cochran seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Stonebridge Management Agreement – Indigo Sports

The City of Rome has used an outside contractor to operate Stonebridge Golf Course for the past twenty-two years. This contract was originally with Billy Casper Golf. Billy Casper Golf has been acquired by Indigo Sports, a division of Troon. The current ten-year management agreement expired at the end of 2025 and city staff is recommending that this agreement be extended for a five-year period.

Commissioner Collins moved to approve the five-year extension of the Stonebridge management agreement with Indigo Sports. Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

City Manager Rich announced that City Offices will be closed on Monday, January 19th in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Garbage and waste collection routes will be amended this week due to the holiday closure.

Rome/Floyd Development Authority

Mayor Bojo announced that the Rome/Floyd Development Authority will meet on Tuesday, January 20th at 9:00 a.m. at 800 Broad Street.

2026 City Commission Date Changes

Mayor Bojo announced that the following two City Commission meetings will be changed in 2026 due to conflicts:

- a. Memorial Day – Monday, May 25th to Tuesday, May 26th
- b. Christmas Week – Monday, December 28th to Monday, December 21st

Cities United Summit

Mayor Bojo announced that the Rome City Commissioners will be attending the Georgia Municipal Association’s 2026 Cities United Summit in Atlanta, Georgia January 23rd – January 26th.

Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority – CHIP Application

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt a resolution of support for the Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority to apply for a Community HOME Investment Program application – CHIP. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The city commission received their presentation regarding this matter from City of Rome Community Development Director Bekki Fox during Caucus prior to tonight’s meeting. If awarded, the Landbank Authority will attempt to build six homes with this funding.

Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority – Memorandum of Understanding

Commissioner Robinson moved to adopt a memorandum of understanding between the Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority and the City of Rome. This MOU will authorize the Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority and the City of Rome Community Development Authority to have certain roles in regard to the CHIP and HOME program requirements. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion for adoption, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Transportation Policy Committee

Commissioner Brock announced that the Transportation Policy Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 21st at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Historic Preservation Commission

Commissioner Cochran announced that the Historic Preservation Commission will meet on Wednesday, January 21st at 2:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.

Recycling Center Deficit Approval

City Manager Rich stated that, once again, the recycling center has operated in a deficit. The deficit currently at hand is for the third quarter of 2025, in the amount of \$47,834 each for the City of Rome, Floyd County, and the Solid Waste Commission.

Commissioner Cochran moved to approve the City of Rome deficit payment of \$47,834 and to approve the payment of the Solid Waste Commission’s deficit payment of \$47,834. Commissioner Beeman seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Planning Commission Statistics and Trends

Rome/Floyd Planning Director Brice Wood briefly reviewed the 2025 Planning Commission statistics and trends handout. During the course of Mr. Wood’s presentation, he noted that the proposed ULDC amendment, if ultimately adopted, would likely greatly reduce the need for special use permits in the future.

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioner Collins announced that the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will meet on Thursday, January 15th at 11:00 a.m. at the Rome Civic Center.

Alcohol Control Commission

Commissioner Robinson announced that the Alcohol Control Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 13th at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers.

Monetary Penalties – 1901 N Broad St. and 1303 Shorter Ave.

Commissioner Robinson announced that License Hearings were held at the December 17, 2025, Alcohol Control Commission meeting for two establishments, which were charged with allowing customers to smoke inside the stores. These convenience store locations are at Miles Legacy (Marathon), 1901 N Broad St. and Shop N Save, 1303 Shorter Ave. Commissioner Robinson stated that the Alcohol Control Commission has recommended each establishment be issued a \$2,000 monetary penalty due to these infractions.

Secretary Smith reported that no one was present representing 1901 N Broad St. at the December Alcohol Control Commission Hearing and the representative for the 1303 Shorter Ave. had disputed the offense occurred. However, Rome Police Officer Zach Colvin gave compelling testimony at the ACC Hearing regarding the infraction occurring at 1303 Shorter Ave.

There was no one present at tonight's meeting representing 1901 N Broad St., however the current licensee at 1303 Shorter Ave., Hillary Brahmhatt, was present tonight. Ms. Brahmhatt did not dispute that the infraction occurred and stated that she was willing to accept the \$2,000 monetary penalty.

Commissioner Robinson moved to approve the \$2,000 monetary penalties for 1901 N Broad and 1303 Shorter Ave. and Commissioner Beeman seconded. There was a brief discussion by the ACC regarding these penalties. Commissioner Collins expressed his opinion that the maximum monetary penalty (\$2,000) was not justified for this type of offense, especially considering it was a first offense.

The motion to approve the penalties was approved by the following vote:

YES: Robinson, Brock, Cochran, Beeman, Fisher, Hixon, and McDaniel

NO: Collins.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Bojo adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk