

## **ROME CITY COMMISSION**

**Monday, February 23, 2026**

The Rome City Commission met at 5:40 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. While the official City Commission meeting was planned to begin at the normal 6:30 p.m. time, this special session, conducted prior to the regular meeting, is for a celebration of Black History Month.

Mayor Bojo presided with Mayor Pro Tem Robinson, and Commissioners Brock, Cochran, Beeman, Fisher, Hixon, Collins, and McDaniel present. Pastor Alston, from the Thankful Missionary Baptist Church in Rome, opened this session with prayer and Commissioner Brock led in the salute to the flag.

Commissioner Beeman outlined the 2026 Black History Month theme of “Unifying Diversity”. Commissioner Beeman stated that three industries and six individuals will be recognized during this ceremony. The following three individuals or families and their industries were recognized:

- Kurt Stuenkel – Atrium/Floyd Health, this proclamation was presented to Mr. Will Byington, representing Mr. Stuenkel, and was read by Mayor Bojo.
- The Watters Family – Integrated Products, five brothers representing the Watters family were present. This proclamation was read by Commissioner Cochran.
- Vernon and Gaynelle Grizzard – Southeastern Mills, was represented by Linda Owens, this proclamation was read by Commissioner Robinson.

The following six individuals were recognized:

- Ms. Helena Finley, this proclamation was read by Commissioner Collins.
- Mr. Christopher Twyman, this proclamation was presented to Mr. Twyman’s mother, Ms. Susie Twyman, and was read by Commissioner Beeman.
- Dr. Jonathan Hershey, this proclamation was read by Commissioner McDaniel. Commissioner McDaniel also presented a proclamation for Mr. Greg Shropshire, who is now deceased.
- Mr. Sanders Hixon, this proclamation was read by Mr. Hixon’s son, Commissioner Hixon.
- Mr. Terrence Hight, Sr., this proclamation was read by Commissioner Brock.

Commissioner Beeman also introduced the Lunch Bunch Students who presented Keeping Diversity Alive gifts to each Commissioner and City Staff member.

### **John Reid**

Commissioner Fisher presented a proclamation to Rome High School Football Coach and Athletic Director, John Reid. Coach Reid is retiring and he was recognized for his outstanding success while leading the Rome High Wolves football team.

With the Black History Month ceremony complete, the regular meeting began at approximately 6:50 p.m.

### **Minutes – February 9, 2026**

The Minutes of the February 9, 2026, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

### **Kristi Miner**

Ms. Kristi Miner, of the Summerville Park neighborhood, once again addressed the City Commission. Ms. Miner used a portion of her three minutes to read from a book titled “Fabian Freeway – High Road to Socialism in the U.S.A., 1884 – 1966”. This book is written by Rose L. Martin. Ms. Miner emphasized that her point is that there should be a separation of powers but, in far too many cases throughout America, law is being formed by administrative attorneys. Ms. Miner feels that Rome’s legislative system, like many others in America, is being chipped away at. The City Commission should be responsive to the citizens and legislative and policy decisions should be made by the elected officials not the City Attorney, City Manager, or the Georgia Municipal Association. Ms. Miner concluded her comments by encouraging the Commissioners to not be puppets and to not let Rome become a “cookie cutter” city.

### **Ron Swinford**

Mr. Ron Swinford, 11 Poplar Street, once again addressed the City Commission and spoke on the topic of data centers. Mr. Swinford called on the Rome City Commission and the Floyd County Commission to place the question of data centers in our community on the ballot for a public referendum. Mr. Swinford feels that a public referendum regarding data centers would be defeated. He encouraged the City Commission to require that data centers accurately estimate their planned water usage and power consumption.

### **Billy Cooper**

Mr. Billy Cooper, of the Mountain Crest subdivision, addressed the City Commission concerning kratom products. Specifically, Mr. Cooper asked the City Commission to support House Bill 968, which is currently before the 2026 Georgia General Assembly. This bill would stipulate that the chemical components in kratom would be treated as Schedule 1 drugs in Georgia. Mr. Cooper stated that eight states have addressed kratom in this manner, including Alabama and Tennessee. Mr. Cooper referenced points made in an article titled “What Law Enforcement Needs to Know About Kratom”. When Mr. Cooper had reached the three-minute mark, the City Commissioners asked him to continue speaking to use up one additional minute to finish the points he was making regarding kratom. Mr. Cooper would have made his presentation in Caucus; however, the Caucus was only thirty minutes in length due to the special ceremony prior to the beginning of this meeting.

After a brief discussion by the City Commission, Commissioner Robinson moved to adopt a resolution of support for House Bill 968. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

City Attorney Davis will draft this resolution of support, and it will be forwarded to Rome’s local legislative delegation, the Governor, and Lt. Governor.

**Z26-02-03 Rezone Waddell, Nelm & Stonewall Streets**

Rome/Floyd Planning Director Brice Wood introduced and reviewed rezoning file Z26-02-03, the request to rezone properties located at 202 Waddell Street, Nelm Street, Stonewall Street, and 203 Stonewall Street, identified by Floyd County tax map numbers J13P-030, J13P-031, J13P-032, and K13Y-552 and 553, from High Density Traditional Residential to Multifamily Residential. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, displayed maps, and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. He stated that the applicant intends to develop housing on this property. The Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning request with the stipulation that a maximum of ten units are developed on these properties.

Mayor Bojo called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was applicant John Hiram, 3410 Long Lake Dr, Douglasville, GA. Mr. Hiram stated that his goal is to build affordable housing on these properties. There was no one else to speak regarding this matter and Mayor Bojo closed the public hearing. Upon being questioned, Mr. Hiram hopes to offer these units in the low \$200,000 range.

Commissioner Hixon moved to approve the rezoning request with the Planning Commission recommended condition that a maximum of ten units be allowed for construction and Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. There was discussion regarding the possibility of more units if water flow in the area was improved. The City of Rome Water and Sewer Department has indicated it would attempt to improve the infrastructure in this area after there are more customers. Commissioner Cochran requested that the motion be amended to allow up to fourteen units for construction if a Fire Marshal approved fire pump was installed in order to improve water pressure/flow for fire protection. Commissioner Hixon accepted this amendment to his motion, as did Commissioner Collins with his second. Mr. Wood noted that there has been a variance filed regarding setbacks for this property, which could impact the number of units that could be constructed. With the discussion concluded, the motion to approve, as amended, was unanimously in favor.

**Coin Operated Amusement Machine (COAM) Waiver Request – Stop N Go, 400A Calhoun Avenue**

Secretary Smith summarized a waiver request that has been filed for the Stop N Go, 400A Calhoun Avenue. Under Rome’s 2024 COAM ordinance, establishments that have COAMs must meet the same distance requirements as alcohol establishments. The Stop N Go located at 400A Calhoun Avenue is too close to a church and to a residence in a residentially zoned area.

This matter was discussed in more detail during Caucus. Commissioner Beeman moved to table this matter until the March 23<sup>rd</sup> City Commission meeting. Commissioner Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The church and nearby residents will be notified of this COAM waiver request and be invited to address the City Commission on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Water and Sewer Committee**

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

### **Joint Services Committee**

Mayor Bojo announced that the Joint Services Committee will meet on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the Floyd County Administration Building.

### **Finance Committee**

Commissioner Robinson announced that the Finance Committee meeting originally scheduled for February 25<sup>th</sup> has been rescheduled to Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

### **Building Inspection Software – Tyler Technologies**

Commissioner Brock reported that the Development Oversight Committee has recommended the purchase of additional Tyler Technology software, which would be used by the Building Inspection Department to assist in more efficient field work regarding their duties. The Fire Marshal's Office involvement with building permits could also be made more efficient through the use of this software. The initial price of the software is \$133,200, and there is an annual maintenance cost of \$103,460. Commissioner Brock moved to accept the Development Oversight Committee's for purchase of this software. Commissioner Robinson seconded.

Assistant City Manager Meredith Ulmer explained the need for this software in more detail. She also stated that the payment for this software, both the initial cost and the ongoing yearly maintenance fee, will come from the Building Inspection's Enterprise Fund and not come from City property tax or sales tax proceeds. There was some discussion by the City Commission regarding the cost of this software, City Manager Rich explained that we are a MUNIS system and this is an additional MUNIS technology. With the discussion concluded, the motion to authorize the purchase of this software was unanimously in favor.

### **Tourism Committee**

Commissioner Cochran announced that the Tourism Committee will meet on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 a.m. at the Civic Center.

### **Tribune Street – Floyd County Historic Courthouse**

Commissioner Fisher announced that restoration work is ongoing with the Floyd County Historic Courthouse and, at times, there will be closures on Tribune Street due to equipment operating in this area.

### **Rome/Floyd Planning Commission**

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

### **Community Redevelopment Committee**

Commissioner Collins announced that the Community Redevelopment Committee meeting scheduled for February 25<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled.

**General Administration Committee and Committee on Committees**

Commissioner McDaniel announced that the General Administration Committee and Committee on Committees will meet on Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

**Landbank Authority, Downtown Development Authority, and Alcohol Control Commission Appointment and Reappointments**

Commissioner McDaniel noted that at the February 9<sup>th</sup> City Commission meeting nominations were made for Ms. Melinda Brown to serve as the joint City/County appointee on the Rome/Floyd Landbank Authority, Ms. Callette Hollingsworth to serve on the Downtown Development Authority, and Ms. Taylor McMichael and Mr. Doug Phipps were nominated for reappointment to the Alcohol Control Commission.

Commissioner Cochran moved to table action on all of these appointment matters. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the motion was approved by the following vote:

**YES: Cochran, Beeman, Fisher, Hixon, and Collins**

**NO: Robinson, Brock, and McDaniel**

**Committee on Committees Discussion**

Commissioner Collins began a discussion, which rapidly became somewhat confrontational, regarding the process used by the Committee on Committees. Commissioner Collins pressed City Attorney Davis for a legal opinion regarding the legality of Committee on Committees meetings. Mr. Davis professionally declined and explained that legal advice will be given in an attorney/client privilege setting.

As the discussion continued, it was questioned whether the Committee on Committees meeting, which have always taken place behind close doors, were legal meetings. Procedurally, the Committee on Committees meets for the sole purpose of making recommendations to the City Commission for citizen appointments to various volunteer positions. All Committee on Committees recommendations are followed by nominations in open City Commission meetings. These nominations are voted on two weeks later during City Commission meetings.

This spirited discussion continued with Commissioner Hixon noting that these types of disagreements would be best resolved in private discussions. Eventually, Mayor Bojo limited debate on this matter and the discussion was concluded.

**President Trump Visit**

Mayor Bojo thanked the Rome Police Department, the City of Rome Public Works Department, and others for the excellent job during President Trump's visit to Rome on February 19, 2026.

**Adjourn**

With there being no further business, Mayor Bojo adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith  
City Clerk