

CITY OF BUCHANAN
Minutes of Work Session
October 20th, 2025

Acting Mayor: Steve Holcombe

Council Members: Ron Moser, Sterling Moore, and Angie Hood were present.

Department Heads: City Clerk Sherry Taylor, Police Chief David Ratner, and Public Works Director Horatio Bell.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe called the work session to order and invited Ms. Jada Ross, who was attending via Zoom, to provide her public comment.

Jada Ross: Ms. Jada Ross addressed the Council regarding her zoning variance request. She expressed concern that her application was not reviewed in accordance with the intended purpose of a zoning variance, which is to address unique hardships. Ms. Ross stated that during meetings with both the rezoning committee and the City Council, the discussion focused primarily on opinions related to neighborhood property values and the impact of manufactured homes, rather than her state hardship. She noted that suggestions were made for her to build a home or seek property elsewhere, though financial limitations make that unfeasible. The denial of the variance has placed her and her daughter in a difficult housing situation. She requested clarification on how the City Council and rezoning committee handle zoning variance requests and emphasized that such variances are intended to address individual hardships rather than general financial or neighborhood considerations. Ms. Ross expressed confusion as to why her request was not considered under the definition of a hardship, particularly since one council member from the affected area supported it.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe stated that Mr. Ross's property is zoned Residential Estate (R-20), which does not permit the placement of mobile or manufactured homes outside of designated mobile home parks. It was explained that allowing an exception could set a precedent leading to legal challenges, as similar requests have been denied in the past under the same zoning restrictions. The Council acknowledged Ms. Ross's financial hardship and stated that they would reconvene to review her concerns and consider any possible options within existing zoning regulations.

Jada Ross: Ms. Ross reiterated that her application was made properly under the city's variance process and emphasized that her request should be evaluated as a hardship case, as intended by zoning variance provisions. Ms. Ross expressed concern that her hardship had not been properly considered and requested clarification on what qualifies as a hardship under the city's zoning regulations.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe reiterated that the city must consider potential legal liabilities and act in accordance with existing zoning laws. The council will consult with the City Attorney to confirm the legal definition and application of a zoning variance. The Council assured Ms. Ross that they would review before the next scheduled meeting.

Jada Ross: Ms. Ross emphasized that being fair to citizens includes considering individual hardships and asked that her request be reviewed through the proper lens as outlined in the city's zoning definitions.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe stated that the Council will follow up and provide clarification, affirming their intent to handle the matter fairly and in compliance with the city's regulations.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe turned the meeting over to Acting Mayor Pro-Tem, Angie Hood, due to a conflict of interest.

Diane Williams: Mrs. Diane Williams addressed the Council to request reconsideration of the city's requirements for an on-site security guard and permit when serving beer and wine at private events. She explained that her events do not include cash bars and typically involve small gatherings, such as toasts, where the cost of a required security guard is \$40 per hour with a three-hour minimum, which creates a financial burden. Mrs. Williams noted that nearby cities such as Bremen and Tallapoosa do not require security for similar events unless alcohol is sold, and as a result, she lost several bookings to venues in those areas.

Acting Mayor Pro-Tem, Angie Hood: Mrs. Hood asked clarifying questions regarding the presence of liquor and confirmed that only beer and wine are served at her events. Mrs. Hood stated that they would review the current ordinance and discuss possible adjustments, and they agreed to follow up after consideration.

Strong House Proclamation: Ms. Streetman read the Strong House Proclamation aloud proclaiming the month of July as Strong House Foundation Month. Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to approve the Strong House Proclamation. Ron Moser made a motion to approve the Strong House Proclamation. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Representative with the Strong House Foundation: A representative from the Strong House Foundation explained what they do as a foundation through mentorship, health education, and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Representative with Your Haven LLC: Chris Martin, a representative from Your Haven, LLC, thanked the council for the opportunity to present the organization's proposal to participate in their Narcan saturation project. He emphasized the critical role Narcan plays in saving lives and combating the ongoing opioid crisis.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe stated that they are working on drafting a Narcan policy to adopt before they participate in the Narcan saturation project. The city will ensure that all employees wishing to participate receive the appropriate training provided by the Your Haven organization.

Acting Mayor Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe adjourned the meeting.

Adjourn

CITY OF BUCHANAN
Minutes of Regular Council Meeting
October 20th, 2025

Acting Mayor: Steve Holcombe.

Council Members: Ron Moser, Angie Hood, and Sterling Moore were present.

Department Heads: City Clerk Sherry Taylor, Police Chief David Ratner, and Public Works Director Horatio Bell.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Calls the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Steve Holcombe, and the innovation was led by Horatio Bell.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the change of moving Frank Norment Homes up to the top of the agenda. Sterling Moore made a motion to approve the agenda with the change. Angie Hood seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to approve the minutes for August 18th, 2025. Ron Moser made a motion to approve the minutes for August 18th, 2025. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Hearing: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Ron Moser made a motion to open the public hearing. Angie Hood seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Application by Frank Norment Homes, LLC, to re-zone parcel 0075 0005A to HDR High Density Residential: Mr. Sapp presented the council with his plans for Grace Gardens, a proposed 55 and older active living community planned for approximately 19 acres on Jeffers Street. The project aims to create a gated community for seniors seeking independent, comfortable living. This project will include amenities like indoor swimming, pickleball courts, walking trails, outdoor fire pits, community gathering areas, shared community garden, etc. Phase one will include the initial residential units within a gated community, which will be a combination of rental and privately owned units to support project financing. All homes will adhere to a unified Homeowners Association (HOA) for consistent design and maintenance standards. An on-site manager will reside within the property to residents who choose to use them. Phase two will be designed years later, consisting of an assisted living facility for residents who may require additional care later in life. Mr. Sapp stated that the intent of Grace Gardens is to provide a vibrant, independent-living option for senior citizens while encouraging social engagement and well-being.

Angie Hood: Mrs. Hood asked clarifying questions concerning the on-duty personnel on site. Mr. Sapp clarified that this will not be a security guard, just a resident that

provides oversight for the gated community. They also clarified that phase two will not be a nursing home.

Ron Moser: Mr. Moser stated that the plans given are different than the ones that were being shown to the community. He also noticed a significant increase in the number of houses on the conceptual plans.

Stephen Sapp: Mr. Sapp stated that 40 units were initially discussed, however further review of the site layout showed that additional cottages could be accommodated without overusing available space. Although the current plan shows an increase in units, traffic impact is expected to remain low due to the nature of the community. He provided additional details regarding the design and layout. Mr. Sapp confirmed that the central portion of the property will be dedicated to the amenities discussed.

Ron Moser: Mr. Moser asked about potential buffers for the surrounding properties. Mr. Sapp ensured that they would work with the community and place any trees or fencing to add an additional buffer as needed.

Stephen Sapp: Mr. Sapp expressed a strong commitment to the community and stated the many projects that he has invested in downtown and the two development projects on Carrollton Street. Mr. Sapp stated his interest in donating welcome signs to the city to give the town a nice facelift.

Keith Worthan: Mr. Worthan shared his concerns regarding the proposed Grace gardens development. He stated that while he respects the intent of creating a 55 and older community, he personally does not support this pace of growth within the city. He is concerned that large developments could change the community's atmosphere. He also noted that this development could potentially increase the demand for local services, given the city's existing challenges with power reliability. Mr. Worthan urged the council to be mindful of the overall pace of growth and its long-term impact on the community.

Shelly Norton: Mrs. Norton expressed several concerns primarily related to access, infrastructure, safety, and neighborhood impact. She noted that the plans do not include a turnaround at the end of the roadway near their property, which has already resulted in vehicles using and damaging their driveway when turning around. She also expressed her concerns with privacy, traffic safety, and drainage and runoff. Mrs. Norton stated that she is not in favor of the development but would remain open to continued discussion.

Stephen Sapp: Mr. Sapp addressed the concerns raised by nearby residents. He agreed that the lack of a turnaround near the project entrance was a valid concern and stated that it would be feasible to include a cul-de-sac or turnaround to accommodate both emergency vehicles and drivers who mistakenly enter the property. He also assured

that emergency services would have gate access to the community. He emphasized that the proposed senior community would generate less traffic than a traditional residential subdivision with younger families and more frequent drivers. Mr. Sapp also offered to install privacy fencing or landscaping buffers as needed. He also highlighted the economic benefits of the project as well. Regarding the electricity impact, he believed that Georgia Power would ensure reliable electrical service for the area as well.

Matthew Moser: Mr. Moser expressed his concern about traffic near his home, noting that his children play in the front and side yards close to where an exit for the proposed development is planned. Mr. Sapp reiterated that the traffic would be far less than in a residential subdivision. They are also willing to install speed bumps and ensure that there is proper signage as well.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Ron Moser made a motion to close the public hearing. Angie Hood seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Application by Frank Norment Homes, LLC, to re-zone parcel 0075 0005A to HDR High Density Residential: Mr. Holcombe asked if the council had any further discussion. Mrs. Hood stated that these plans are a lot different than what was discussed and need further discussion. Mr. Moser agreed. The attorney stated that it would have to be at another public meeting, so they will revisit this at the November Council meeting. Mr. Sapp stated that they are willing to work with the council and answer any questions that they might have. Mr. Moser made a motion to table this item until the next meeting. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Bids for Tree Work: Mr. Bell presented two bids to cut and remove trees on Warehouse Street, from Business 27 up to Van Wert Street. This project affects the city, Buchanan Pizza and Wings, and the trailer park. All parties have agreed to the cutting and removal of the trees discussed. Mr. Worthan, owner of Buchanan City Pizza and Wings, stated that he is willing to pay half of the costs to remove the trees since they pose a threat to his building if they were to fall. The council looked over the bids and decided D&M Tree Service was the lowest bid. Angie Hood made a motion to approve the bid from D&M Tree Service for \$6,000. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Parnell Insurance-Worker's Compensation: Ty Parnell presented the insurance renewal for worker's compensation. He stated that the total premium has decreased from last year, with a total premium of \$13,246. Ron Moser made a motion to approve the workers' compensation renewal as presented. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to go into executive session for legal. Ron Moser made a motion to go into executive session for legal. Angie Hood seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Executive Session-Legal

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe made a motion to come out of executive session. Ron Moser made a motion to come out of executive session. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Moratorium: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to place a 90-day moratorium on high density plat approvals and building permits due to needing to reevaluate zoning and safety codes. Angie Hood made a motion to approve a 90-day moratorium on high density plat approvals and building permits. Ron Moser seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Zoning Amendments: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to table this item until Northwest Georgia Regional Commission has a chance to review the changes and give any needed feedback. Ron Moser made a motion to table this item until Northwest Georgia Regional Commission has a chance to review the changes. Sterling Moore seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Departmental Updates

Public Works Department: Mr. Bell updated the council on the Public Works Department. The department had 27 locates and 5 water leaks this month. They re-built the pump at the Westmoreland lift station. They will also need to purchase a new tract for the mini excavator.

Police Chief David Ratner: Mr. Ratner updated the council on crime and statistics for the month. Mr. Ratner asked Gene Fields to be the Chaplain for the city for spiritual guidance on calls as well as emotional support for the officers.

City Clerk, Sherry Taylor: Mrs. Taylor updated the council on the City Clerk's Department. The taxes will be delayed until the county sends over the final digest. From the calculations, it looks like the city will be able to roll the millage rate back. The budget will be tight, but the city can make it work. Mrs. Streetman has been working on the Pumpkin Caper, Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting, and the Bell Tower Bash. We ordered Christmas ornaments for the children to decorate to place on the tree on the square. The city plans on getting a real tree this year for the tree lighting.

Acting Mayor, Steve Holcombe: Mr. Holcombe asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ron Moser made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Angie Hood seconds the vote. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourn