

City of Byron
Mayor and Council Minutes
August 24, 2026

The City of Byron Mayor and Council met in special session/public forum at 6:00pm in the Auditorium at the Municipal Complex. Mayor Michael Chidester ran late due to a work issue and came in after 7:00pm. Council Members James Richardson, Michael Chumbley, Rusty Adams, Alan Dorsey, and Chris Hodges were in attendance. City Attorney Brian Causey was also present. City employees that attended were City Administrator Tiffany Sandefur, City Clerk Telina Allred, Chief Court Clerk Dede Thibodeaux, Police Chief Wesley Cannon, Police Captain Bryan Hunter, Lieutenant Rob Boutwell, Fire Chief Josh Riley, Fire Captain Doug Kelley, Firefighters Longo and Harris as well. There were 206 visitors present at the meeting and representatives from the Leader Tribune, Byron Buzz, Fox 24, 13 WMAZ, and 41 NBC were also in attendance.

Mayor Pro Tem Michael Chumbley called the meeting to order at 6:00pm, asked James Richardson to give the invocation, and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then gave the meeting over to the City Administrator Tiffany Sandefur who stated that the Ordinance would run on the projector and read aloud as well. Once it reads through the Ordinance, she stated that she would open the floor for any questions and comments. Ms. Sandefur brought in experts to answer any questions that citizens may want further answers to. Experts attending the meeting were Scott Cox from Georgia Power, Scott Greene from Thomas & Hutton for their history with Data Centers and Ordinances, and civil engineer Burke Murph from Georgia Water & Environmental Services.

After some technical difficulties, City Administrator Tiffany Sandefur finished reading the proposed Ordinance to the crowd. The floor opened with the first question from Robin Wright and her concerns of how the power and water are measured and it was answered 1.8 gallons of water per kilowatt hour. Scott Cox said it will be a closed loop system and the peak amount scenarios that you may see are amounts that no one ever uses. Carol Lafferty asked what kind of capacity is needed and when can the study be done to which it was answered that the data center pays for the study to be done. She wanted to know if eminent domain would be used. Scott Cox assured her that Georgia Power has a less than 1% condemnation rate to which Ms. Lafferty said that was a lot to her. She also asked to please make the DBA's lower. Lee Lafferty said that under the "purpose" section, would there be local jobs for local people and the mayor answered that he does not know how many jobs there will be. Mr. Lafferty also asked that the mayor look into clarifying Section 5, Part A, item 5, IV, that reads "excluding any property owned or controlled by the data center owner or operator" ... Mayor Chidester thanked him and said he would check it out. Mr. Lafferty also had many concerns about Boy Scout Road being torn up by so many big trucks, especially because it is in a sad state of repair right now. He asked who would be responsible for damages to citizen's vehicles and who would be responsible for the maintenance. The mayor stated that those items can be discussed in a pre-application meeting and agreement made prior to construction. These meetings are with staff with proprietary information, so they are typically not

open to the public. Mayor Chidester assured the citizens that the city won't leave Byron in poor condition. One citizen stated she didn't believe that! Mr. Lafferty said that he felt like some wording using "may" needs to be replaced with "shall" and ask that it be revisited and also noted that he respectfully disagrees with the strength of the ordinance. Mr. Lafferty began to speak then about his "pristine" well water and worries about keeping it that way. He wanted to know who pays for any damage. The mayor said that it is covered in the ordinance and that the city will decide upon a radius that it will cover should anything arise. Kathryn Schnabel commented that jobs may be out of state so how can that help local people? Under the decommissioning of a data center, she said it should be returned to its previous natural setting. The mayor stated that they must give the city a one-year advance notice of decommissioning and then create a plan with the City of Byron as stated in Section 7. They shall sign a \$20,000,000 decommissioning bond as well. Ms. Schnabel also said the city needed to expand on the property setbacks because she felt it was too close to people's property lines. The mayor said that they have studied it and said it can be even closer with a dirt berm because dirt berms can kill the sound. Ms. Schnabel then asked if they had visited a data center in a rural area. Mayor Chidester responded saying the Mayor of Douglasville lives very close to one and he and his council attended a forum. She then stated that a third party do necessary studies and not an employee of the City of Byron and then asked if it will be publicly available. Mayor Chidester said the studies are covered under Section 5, subsection 9, and that studies will be available. She then asked how long generators will run and at what kind of break in between to which the mayor said he would take that under advisement. When questions arose once again about pollution of wells and water, the mayor directed everyone again to say that a radius would be decided upon regarding the matter. Austin said that a 99% successful condemnation/emanant domain rate is troubling to him. Scott Cox stated these are very long-term negotiations with good outcomes. Austin retorted by asking him to please speak respectfully to us! Deanna Moody who lives in the closest proximity that anyone present said her concerns were heat, water, and sound and requested that a civil engineer speak on that saying how will you protect us? A shout from the audience said Industrial Hygiene Study! Scott Greene said that stormwater follows federal, state, and city guidelines and all developers must adhere to this. Development regulations is a MUST. The city permits water through the state and Environmental Protection Division, which is another set of standards. She asked if he would be testing to which he answered that we always do. Ms. Moody said that trees don't cut out all sound and the sound needs to be mitigated. Cole Kennedy asked why the city hasn't taken the time to do more research, and will you promise to do more research before a vote? The mayor said that they have researched so very much. The crowd went into an uproar. Mr. Kennedy then asked why can't the citizens vote on a rezone? We presented our opinions and council did not listen! Alecia Scott posed a question to Georgia Power representative Scott Cox asking about how to prevent price increases. Scott said inflation brought prices up when clean energy was being introduced and everything it took to get it going, but rate reductions were given to every person because large load was coming in. Alecia asked if the rates would go up

because of the data center coming in and he said that is for the data center to pay and not the citizens. She said she wanted to know why there weren't any other businesses or industry coming into Byron and why no one had looked into it. The mayor said that there is a limit to what the city can provide any industry because the city doesn't have the capacity for sustaining it. Kathleen Berger said that the city talks about the quality of life and it smells like poo to her! AI is harmful with deep fake accounts and will just make us dumber. She said there are currently 276 data centers in Georgia and says shame on you all for being sell outs! Charlotte Berger said she wanted to know why a data center is coming when no one wants it? The mayor said that Douglasville wants more, for example, and that this meeting room is not everyone. Jake Battle respectfully requested that the data center ordinance be tabled for six more months saying that he feels the ordinance has many loopholes and leaves all vulnerable. Jason Jones asked if the transmission lines would get upgrades or go into eminent domain to which Scott Cox answered that it would most likely stay in the same corridor. He then asked about working hours and was answered by Burke Murph of GWES that that it is typically not beyond the hours of a normal working day. Jason continued to speak on the height of a berm and was reminded that there was no application before the city. Jason also asked about the DbA and DbC levels to which it needed better clarification. The mayor agreed to look into it. Jason stated that ambient noise levels are around 40. Council Member Chris Hodges asked Jason what level would be acceptable for him to which he answered the ambient at 40. Pam Price asked if council would make a way to at least give the public a voice regarding issues as they arise regarding the data center on the Crawford side. Stephanie Adams addressed wells asking how she could protect herself. She answered to do baseline water testing. Council member Rusty Adams said the health department can do the testing for free. A citizen said they now charge \$60.00. It was asked that the specific steps that need to be taken to protect herself if something with the well happens. Carol Lafferty appealed to council saying to make the ordinance strong enough to protect the people. She then quoted scripture from Matthew 24:40*** and said she wanted them to remember that as they made decisions. Mike West asked why the noise couldn't be 60Db during the day and 50 at night. Amanda Mooreland asked that the city mandate generators be battery powered and not run on gasoline. Cynthia Cumming had questions on allotted money for fire calls as is covered in 6(f) and Mary Blankenship asked why the data center is light industrial and Karen Hatton addressed health concerns on having data centers and asked what they are giving back. Linda Marcola said that she represents many that were unable to attend the meeting. Council member Chris Hodges spoke at the close to the crowd saying that he had lived in Byron almost 52 years, went to school in Byron and Peach County High School. He spoke about having a business in this town and loves Byron so he takes offense when people say that he does not care about Byron and is lining his pockets!

Mayor and Council Minutes
August 24, 20265
Page 4, cont'd.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion was made by Chris Hodges, seconded by Alan Dorsey to adjourn the meeting at 9:32pm. Unanimous.

Telina Allred
Clerk of Council