

CITY OF CHICKAMAUGA, GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR

TREY DECK

For Immediate Release via Counsel for the Mayor

Jeremy Penland, Esq. and Michael M. Thomas, Esq

This the 8th day of February, 2026

A STATEMENT FROM THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICKAMAUGA TREY DECK

The Mayor provides this statement in an effort to fulfill campaign promises, particularly with respect for transparency to his constituents. For more than a month, the Mayor has been inundated with questions about the proceedings, but under advice of counsel, has not spoken on the issue. However, given the lengthy delay of the so called “emergency” and public sentiment, the Mayor believes the public is owed a response concerning certain aspects of the proceedings.

First, the Mayor would like to address the improper nature and violation of the City Charter concerning the most recent published agenda. The Mayor contends the notice of hearing published by the City Manager is deficient and in violation of City Charter Section 3.12 in that it did not provide 48 hours’ notice. Notice was published on the Chickamauga City Website at 5:00 on Friday, February 6, 2026, setting the hearing for Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:00 pm. Specifically, Section 1-2 of the City’s Ordinance states that any notice period which provides for fewer than seven days shall not include weekends. Being that Notice was not issued until after hours late Friday afternoon, not enough time has run to properly commence a hearing. Furthermore, the City Manager has not provided three recently elected City Council members the opportunity to take their oaths of office pursuant to Section 3.11 of the Charter, which cannot occur until a regularly scheduled hearing. This special hearing does not qualify. Consequently, the City Council Members are not authorized to commence business on behalf of the City until such time as the oaths are lawfully administered in accordance with the City Charter.

These issues only delay the hearing but do not stop the impending hearing. However, proper notice and procedure would permit the Mayor adequate time to petition the Court seeking injunctive relief, and provide time to be heard by the Court, in order to preserve the Mayor’s constitutional rights to due process. If the City is not willing to provide due process to the Mayor, then it must follow that the City is not willing to consider the due process rights of its citizens. The Mayor stands up for the rights of all citizens of the City of Chickamauga.

Additionally, the Mayor recently obtained relevant evidence via open records request to City Hall, which was not provided by the City Attorney. This evidence provides, without a doubt, that the City Manager and at least one City Council member have considered the evidence without hearing the Mayor's defense to the charges weeks before this hearing was set. This text message string, obtained by the Mayor in accordance with an open records request, clearly shows that said council member has already decided the Mayor's fate before considering any evidence offered by the Mayor. Furthermore, this City Council member, and at least one other City Council member, are either direct business associates of the City Manager, Michael Haney, or have contracts with the City that were negotiated with and approved by the City Manager. Notwithstanding these conflicts, these City Council Members have failed to recuse themselves from deciding the Mayor's case despite their clear conflicts of interest.

Mr. Haney is responsible for initiating this removal action in retaliation for campaign promises made by the Mayor to remove Mr. Haney from his role as the City Manager. Notably, it is believed that Mr. Haney did not attend the previous meeting in order to avoid being called as a witness by the Mayor's representative despite being the individual initiating and conducting the investigation into purported allegations of inappropriate comments made by the Mayor to city employees; an allegation which the Mayor vehemently denies.