



**City of West Point**  
Council Work Session Minutes  
Tuesday, November 25, 2025 @ 5:30 p.m.  
West Point Council Chambers

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The Work Session of the Mayor and Council was held in the Council room of West Point City Hall on November 25, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Steve M. Tramell opening the session.

Members Present:

Mayor Pro-Tempore Joseph R. Downs III  
Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter  
Councilmember Joel B. Finlay  
Councilmember Kevin M. Patrick  
Councilmember Sandra Thornton

Members Absent:

Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall

**Public Hearing for 2026 Proposed City Budget**

Mayor Steve Tramell opened the public hearing.

No public comment.

Mayor Steve M. Tramell called the meeting to order.

**Review Agenda**

Mayor Steve M. Tramell reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Kevin M. Patrick made said motion. Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III seconded the motion; **passed unanimously**.

**Public Comment on Any Items**

Carrie Royster Wood with the Greater Valley Area Chamber of Commerce provided a “Year in Review” report. The Chamber welcomed 35 new members, hosted 25 ribbon cuttings, 4 VIBE After 5 events, 4 Catch Up Over Coffee gatherings, 3 Lunch ’n Learns, Rockingfest on the Square, and other community activities. Upcoming December events include Shop Teal Thursday on December 4 **and the** Christmas Parade on December 11.

Resident Cherrie L. Bowen addressed the Council requesting a moratorium on data centers. She expressed concerns about potential negative impacts—such as excessive noise, heavy water and power usage, increased traffic during construction, and limited job creation—and asked that the city update its ordinances to ensure any future data centers operate as good neighbors and provide a positive influence on the community.

**New Business**

• **2026 Proposed City Budget**

City Manager Ed Moon presented the Proposed 2026 Budget, totaling \$26,080,821.73 across all funds. The proposed budget reflects a 14% reduction from the previous year. Planned equipment purchases include a new

bucket truck, vehicle replacements, a remount ambulance, an inmate van, 911 system updates, and police department camera upgrades, totaling \$1,260,000. An increase in service rates is also recommended: 2% for residential and commercial water and sewer rates, 6% for industrial water and sewer rates, 3% for garbage service, An additional \$1.00 for trash service. Electric and gas rates will be evaluated next year. The budget also includes salary adjustments for Public Safety departments (Police, Fire, EMS, and 911 Communications). A 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). Salary and benefits total \$7,726,836.47. The City's only debt obligations include the USDA Fire Station loan, Gas Pipeline loan, and Water and Sewer bond. Projected 2026 projects include improvements to the Water Plant, Water Intake, Soccer Fields, Cemetery, and Long Cane Creek Bridge. This item will be on the next business meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **Board and Committee Appointments**

City Clerk Kristin Lester reported that two applications were received for the upcoming vacancy on the West Point Development Authority, with the current term ending December 31. The applicants are Jamie Welch and incumbent Aaron Lewis. Their completed applications are included in the Council packet for review. This item will be placed on the business meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **Local Homestead Exemption**

City Manager Ed Moon presented information regarding the Local Act for Homestead Exemption. He explained that if the Mayor and Council are interested in offering a Local Homestead Exemption, the first step is to determine whether the type of exemption to be implemented. The next step would be to discuss the process with the Tax Commissioners. A resolution would then need to be created and approved, followed by a request for the legislative delegation representing West Point to sponsor a local bill. Staff recommended setting the West Point Local Homestead Exemption amount at \$10,000. The exemption amount will be placed on the business meeting agenda for council consideration.

In January 2026, the local legislation would be introduced during the 2026 State Legislative Session. If approved, the Local Act would proceed to the Governor for signature approximately 40 days after the close of the Legislative Session in May 2026. In June 2026, the city would prepare and approve a resolution for a referendum and coordinate with the Troup County Election Supervisor to hold the referendum in November 2026. If approved by voters, the Local Homestead Exemption would be applied to tax bills beginning in 2027.

### **Other**

Councilmember Kevin Patrick announced that the West Point Police Department will be giving away 40 Christmas trees on a first-come, first-served basis on November 26 at 4:00 p.m. The giveaway will take place at 206 West 9th Street.

Mayor Steve M. Tramell announced that 110 Thanksgiving meals, prepared by Rogers Barbeque and sponsored by local community members, will be distributed on Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the corner of MLK Drive and 10th Street.

Meghan Richardson, Economic Development Director, announced that West Point's Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on Tuesday, December 2 at 5:30 p.m.

**The next Business Meeting December 8, 2025 5:30p.m.**

- 2026 City Budget
- Board and Committee Appointment
- Local Homestead Exemption Resolution

## **ADJOURN**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Sandra Thornton made said motion and seconded by Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter; **passed unanimously**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.