

**CITY OF SKY VALLEY
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026 AT 6:00 P.M.
3608 HWY 246 (CITY HALL) & VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM)
SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA**

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - March 3, 2026 – Council Work Session
 - March 3, 2026 – Special Called Council Meeting
- 4. Adoption of Agenda**
- 5. Public Forum and General Comments**
 - ❖ *ANY PERSON WITH BUSINESS BEFORE THE COUNCIL, NOT SCHEDULED ON THE AGENDA AS A PUBLIC HEARING MAY SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL FOR A MAXIMUM OF FIVE MINUTES*
 - ❖ *THE SPEAKER MUST IDENTIFY BY NAME*
 - ❖ *NO FORMAL ACTION CAN BE TAKEN*
- 6. Mayoral/Council Remarks**
- 7. City Manager Report**
- 8. Departmental Reports**
- 9. Committee Reports**

NEW BUSINESS

- 10. Consider approval of the replacement of Kennon McCollum with Matt Davidson on the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee**
- 11. Consider approval of the Community Connections Advisory Committee Proposed Member Appointments**
- 12. Consider approval of the Proposed Planning and Zoning Member Appointments**
- 13. Consider sunseting of the Special Projects Advisory Committee, Landscaping Advisory Committee, and Mayoral Advisory Committee**
- 14. Consider Approval of FY2026 Sky Valley Marketing Committee Budget**

OTHER BUSINESS

- 15. Executive Session**
- 16. Adjournment**

You may join the meeting at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82783162306>

Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities are required to call 706-746-2204 promptly to allow the City to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SKY VALLEY COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026, AT 8:30 A.M.; LOCATION - 3608 HWY. 246 (CITY HALL) AND VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM) SKY VALLEY, GA 30537

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Cotton-Orr, Councilors Allred, Price, Beasley, and Curtis; Councilor Pence joined via Zoom

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Streetman, City Attorney Kidd, City Clerk Fleming, Communication Specialist Van Camp, Water Coordinator English, Public Works Superintendent Shope, and Police Chief Baumes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Cotton-Orr called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She stated that she still has very serious doubts concerning the need for a sewer system. The City deserves a needs assessment beyond the economic feasibility study for determination. She stated that is her perspective and may or may not also be that of the City Council. This project needs careful and deliberate consideration. There will be as many Work Sessions and Public Hearings as needed.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Councilor Curtis made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Councilor Allred, unanimously approved.

3. Discussion of the proposed Sky Valley Sewer Project

Mayor Cotton-Orr stated that this meeting is not a Public Hearing, just gathering information on the proposed sewer system. The meeting will last for approximately 90 minutes which Mayor and Council will have up to five minutes each during the introductory. Time is allotted for invited guests to speak and for up to 30 minutes for public comments.

Councilor Pence stated that the residents of Sky Valley wouldn't want the Council to make a decision or asking GEFA for an extension, based on old data with the looming May deadline approaching. The decision needs to be made on definitive information that is gathered from experts help, along with the public. The GEFA grant was applied for and received in 2021 and the ARC grant was applied for in 2025 and is waiting confirmation.

Councilor Allred stated that the proposed sewer project has been talked about some 20 years but money has always been the issue. He would hope this Council would make careful decisions while considering this issue as it could have long-term implications.

Councilor Price stated that new data needs to be obtained along with a needs assessment in order to make the best-informed decision.

Councilor Beasley had no comment.

Councilor Curtis stated that the most pressing issue is to define what we collectively want from a needs assessment. Time is of the essence. He compiled a list of questions that he hopes a needs assessment would answer.

1. Could the E. coli readings have been caused by wildlife or farm animals in our watershed?
2. Are there other realistic alternatives to a sewer system and package plant?
3. Are 50-year-old septic systems prone to failure and can they be replaced?
4. Can the preliminary engineering plans be reviewed to identify changes that could reduce the capital and operating cost of the system?
5. What are the annual operating expenses for the system that will need to be considered for user rates?
6. Can the infrastructure be built to accommodate during peak demand, can be expandable?
7. Conclusions: Is a sewer system needed now or in the future? Is five million enough? Should we accept the grants and build the sewer or postpone action until we find a better solution?

Mayor Cotton-Orr stated that questions are not an obstruction, it's about governance. She was elected along with the three new councilors are the bases of questions concerning the sewer and the proposed high-density development. The questions/discussions are not a criticism towards EMI or City Manager Streetman as they performed as directed. The ARC grant has been approved and is awaiting her signature as acceptance. She is waiting for her questions to be answered before deciding whether to sign or not to sign. Receiving the funding doesn't eliminate the obligation to examine the total cost and impact on Sky Valley. GEFA has stated previously that there is serious doubt that five million would fund the project. Questions then arise where the additional funding would come from. Gathering information is imperative to make a decision. Guests were invited from the Country Club, Time Shares, and Valley View at the last Work Session to talk about the need for a sewer system and what measures have been taken to remedy their septic issues. The Club did respond at that time and Valley View sent a letter which Mayor Cotton-Orr asked City Manager Streetman to read aloud, and it read as follows:

"Mayor and Council Members – First, we appreciate the opportunity to attend the workshop Regarding the proposed septic system at Sky Valley. As board members of the Valley View Condominium Association, we are writing to express concerns regarding the upcoming decision of the Council on whether or not to move forward with the construction of a new sewer Sewer system. We previously sent an email to the City Manager expressing our support of the City moving forward with this project in theory. We still need information on the cost to Valley View and our residents, including hook up costs and expected monthly charges for users of the system. We feel that a sewer system may be needed for both our Condo Association and the overall environmental health of the City.

This is a project that should not financially affect all of the property owners of the City, but only those property owners where sewer services will be provided. We ask therefore, that you weigh in your decision, the opinions of those that are directly impacted, and solicit their opinions. We are aware that this was an issue in the last election, and the council may feel that they have a mandate from the public to not move forward on this project. We want to mention that there are approximately 1000 residential units with probably 2000 owners in Sky Valley, not counting the time share units. All of these properties pay taxes, and in fact those property owners that are not able to vote pay a higher rate since they don't get homestead exemption. So, while the difference in the election outcome was a matter of a couple of dozen votes, this represents a very small fraction of the affected property owners. Valley View alone has approximately 100 owners, very few of which were able to express their opinion in the last election. We think it is important that those directly affected by this decision be given the

highest weighting, and while most of us were unable to vote, we would hope that the Council would represent the interest of all property owners, not just voter.

Sewer services are not a new concept. In googling cities in Georgia, without sewer services, we were only able to find less than a handful. We are the exception not the rule, and when it comes to protecting the environment, we are on the wrong side of the equation. The State of Georgia and the Federal government would not be providing financial assistance of over five million dollars to us and many times that across the state if they did not believe it was good public policy to provide sanitary sewers. There is clear and convincing evidence that sanitary sewers improve the environment and overall water quality. We also are aware that in the past, raw sewage was seeping across the Sky Valley golf course and probably making its way into the lakes and streams.

It is important to point out that at the time our units were built they complied with all of the development codes then in existence. Times change, and today these units may not have been permitted with this level of density. This was likely a failure of the vision of the government at that time, and what we need now is a vision for the future. We need to adjust our thinking to our current situation as we are not the only property owners with sanitary sewer issues that will be addressed by this project.

We think it is important to point out that the cost will be borne by those with services and should have little or no financial impact upon those where services are unavailable. We are also aware that many people voted against this to stop new development. There should be multiple ways for the City to control development other than to elect not to provide sanitary sewers.

We thank you for your consideration: Board Member of Valley View, Hilda Thompson, Billy Humphries, Bob Truitt, Bob Inzer, and Jim Cole”.

Peggy Durham, Sky Valley Resident for 26 years, urged the Council to make a critical decision for Sky Valley's future. Property values fall where known septic problems exist and this could be the remedy while the funding is available. She stated her experiences with odor from leaking septic systems while playing croquet and at the Sky Valley Chapel area, and what her husband had experienced on the golf course. Having the grant money available to build a package plant for the valley area is a great opportunity and to her understanding only limited new development could tie on. Nice looking development would look better than the old dilapidated lodge area. Harrison Merrill had put millions into the golf course and new Country Club. He filed for bankruptcy and this area was sold for pennies on the dollar, and has hosted many gatherings with residents of Sky Valley. The City could have, with the right developer and she believes Harrison Merrill Jr. could be, responsible development but environmental issues are a concern for all.

Jesse Durham, Sky Valley Resident, stated that he had four takeaways from the last Work Session. The first one was the need to explore package plants and issues more thoroughly. Second, is five million enough to build what is needed. Thirdly, microbiology tests need to be conducted and to find out if old drain fields can be repaired as the condo complexes do not have the property to put new septic system on. Finally, a strict timeline is needed for these objectives to be answered before the deadline is upon us. He has not seen any activity from the City dealing with these objectives.

Garnet Lawrence, Sky Valley Resident for five and a half years, stated that he expressed his concerns on a sewer system during the election and how it would interrupt life for some but sometimes you have to do what is for the betterment of the community. He requested that if testing or needs assessment is not underway that it happens soon due to the timeline.

Vicki Heher, Sky Valley Resident, is concerned that if there is development in the valley the golf course could fail, which she has seen before. She asked the Council to take all into consideration before making a decision.

Gail Greenfelder, Sky Valley Resident since 1982, stated that each association should maintain their own septic systems and wonder if all avenues have been explored and/or exhausted. She also feels like Time Shares and Valley View should pay for the needs assessment and the project needs to be tabled until all has been taken into consideration.

Karla Stahl, Sky Valley Resident, agreed with what Parker had said before about when septic tanks fail, you then have just a campsite. She feels that the City should pay for the needs assessment to protect all of the City. Failing septic systems could affect the tax roll.

Dave Travis, Sky Valley Resident for 22 years, stated that there are a lot of questions at play. Sky Valley needs some development to help with flat revenues. The Council needs to consider their decisions holistically and long-term for the next generation.

Maggie Smith, Georgia Regional Mountain Commission (GRMC), helped write the ARC grant and stated this opportunity, regarding the two grants, would probably never happen again. There would be no official consequences but wouldn't look good if the grants were turned down, making it difficult to obtain any in the future. She answered questions from the Council concerning criteria of the GEFA and ARC grants and the capacity requirements.

Kim Beaty, Time Shares of Sky Valley, Inc., President, stated that the organizations are having to deal with expensive septic repairs and is limited in land to use. They have questions concerning tie on fees and usage fees if the sewer project moves forward, for budgeting reasons. In promoting the time shares, a sound sewer system would be beneficial, and they are not looking for other property owners to pay for their needs. The company will be holding a meeting on April 7, 2026 and a letter will be forthcoming.

Councilor Allred stated that in his opinion the Mayor and the three new Council members got elected due to them wanting to shut down the proposed sewer system and any new development. The previous Council have already done the preliminary studies and suggested that this Council should just stop any further actions since common sense will tell you what you need to do.

Councilor Beasley stated that the water infrastructure should be prioritized as the sewer system could bankrupt the City. She thinks that the grants should be given back as testing needs to be completed before continuing with any plans.

4. Adjournment

As the allotted time came to an end, Councilor Curtis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Allred, unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Benita Cotton-Orr, Mayor

Attest:

Karen Fleming, City Clerk

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SKY VALLEY SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING THAT WAS HELD ON A TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026, AT 10:00 AM; LOCATION WAS 3608 HWY 246 (CITY HALL) & VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM), SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Cotton-Orr, Councilors Allred, Price, Beasley, and Curtis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Pence

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Streetman, City Attorney Kidd, City Clerk Fleming, Communication Specialist Van Camp, Water Coordinator English, Public Works Superintendent Shope, and Chief of Police Baumes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Cotton-Orr called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Allred led the Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes

February 17, 2026 – Council Work Session

February 17, 2026 – Regular Called Council Meeting

Councilor Price made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Councilor Curtis, unanimously approved.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Councilor Beasley made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Councilor Price, unanimously approved.

5. Public Forum and General Comments

Mayor Cotton-Orr stated that scrutiny and disagreements are a part of civic life. If anyone would like to voice their opinion, our contact information, City Council, can be found on the City's website. Please direct all comments to us directly, and not to our families, as they are not part of the City Council and deserve their privacy. Issues will not be adjudicated on social media as that is what we hold public meetings for. We can disagree with respect and order and that will be the expectation going forward.

NEW BUSINESS

6. Consider amendment to the Sky Valley Zoning Ordinance (2nd reading & adoption)

City Attorney Kidd stated that this will be the second reading of the amendment to the Sky Valley Zoning Ordinance. The amendment will be to Section 15-01 "Creation and appointment" adding "whether part-time or full-time" which clarifies which residents that can serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilor Curtis made a motion to approve the amendment to the Sky Valley Zoning Ordinance, seconded by Councilor Allred. Mayor Cotton-Orr called for the vote: Councilor Allred, Price, and Curtis- Yea, Councilor Beasley – Nay. The motion carried 3-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

7. Executive Session

None

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, Councilor Beasley made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Price, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:

Benita Cotton-Orr, Mayor

Attest:

Karen Fleming, City Clerk

Proposed Member Appointees for the Planning and Zoning Commission

Chair: Tony Allred

2nd Council Member: Jesse Price

Members: Romona Galey and Jim Phelps

Ex Officio Members: Building Inspector Pyburn, City Manager Streetman, and Mayor Cotton-Orr

Proposed Member Appointees for Community Connections Advisory Committee:

Members: Barbara Kobacker, Charles Anthony, Leslie Fletcher, Tim McClelland, Jim Rhodes, and Councilor Beth Pence

Ex Officio Members: Mayor Cotton-Orr, City Manager Streetman and Communication Specialist Van Camp

RESOLUTION NO. ____

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sky Valley seek to promote transparency in events and communications; and

WHEREAS public outreach strengthens public trust and community engagement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT

The Community Connections Advisory Committee is hereby established, comprising seven voting members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council:

1. One member of the City Council.
2. Five (5) citizens of the United States who are residents of the City of Sky Valley. For the purposes of this resolution, “resident” means someone who either owns or rents property in Sky Valley and who lives full time or part time within the Sky Valley city limits.

The City Communications Specialist shall participate in an ex officio, non-voting staff support role, as approved by the City Council.

The Mayor shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Committee, consistent with the Standing Committees Resolution.

Chair: Appointed by the Mayor from among the Committee members, subject to approval by the City Council.

Quorum: A majority of the appointed voting committee members.

Term: Members shall serve one-year terms, renewable annually, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms. The Chair shall serve a one-year term, renewable annually, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms.

SECTION 2. DUTIES.

The Community Connections Advisory Committee shall:

1. Evaluate and recommend proposed City-sponsored community events, and collaborate and coordinate with City staff, volunteers and participating organizations.

2. Assist in developing and maintaining City communications platforms, including the City website, newsletters, alerts, and social media.
3. Provide recommendations regarding public messaging and outreach.
4. Promote engagement among both full-time and part-time residents and facilitate public feedback channels.
5. Explore voluntary community partnerships with civic groups, the POA, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses.
6. Encourage accessible, timely, and inclusive communications.
7. Support programs that strengthen community identity and civic pride.

SECTION 3. TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY.

In addition to the requirements of the Standing Committees Resolution, the Committee shall:

- (a) Comply with the Georgia Open Meetings Act.
- (b) Provide periodic communications reports to the City Council as requested.
- (c) Work with staff to provide public engagement summaries following surveys, forums, or listening sessions when practicable.
- (d) Conduct an annual review of community engagement and communications practices and report findings to the City Council.
- (e) Ensure conflicts of interest related to partnerships or sponsorships are disclosed.
- (f) Ensure meeting minutes are recorded and filed with the City Clerk in accordance with City policy.

SECTION 4. LIMITATION OF AUTHORITY

The Community Connections Advisory Committee established under this resolution shall not:

- (a) Exercise legislative, executive, or administrative authority;
- (b) Direct City staff or operations;
- (c) Approve expenditures or bind the City to any obligation;
- (d) Supersede or duplicate the authority of other standing committees.

SECTION 5. GOVERNING AUTHORITY AND CONSISTENCY.

This Resolution is adopted pursuant to the Standing Committees Resolution of the City of Sky Valley and is intended to implement, supplement, and provide committee-specific guidance consistent therewith. This Resolution shall be construed in harmony with the

Standing Committees Resolution and applicable law. In the event of any conflict, inconsistency, or ambiguity between this Resolution and the Standing Committees Resolution, the provisions of the Standing Committees Resolution shall govern and control.

Nothing in this Resolution shall be construed to expand or diminish the powers, duties, appointment authority, or limitations established by the Standing Committees Resolution or by Georgia law.

SECTION 6: EFFECTIVE DATE

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

RESOLVED this ____ day of _____ 2026

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Sky Valley Marketing Committee 2026 Proposed Budget

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2024 | 2025 | 2025 | 2026 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Actual | Budget | Actual | Budget | Actual | Budget Proposed |
| Monetary Contributions | | | | | | |
| City of Sky Valley | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| POA | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| Club | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| SV Time Shares | | | | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| Total | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$15,000 |
| Checking account balance carryover | | \$4,619 | \$6,404 | \$6,404 | \$6,404 | \$10,440.41 |
| Funds available for marketing expenses | | \$19,619 | \$19,619 | \$26,404 | \$26,404 | \$25,440.41 |
| EXPENSES | | | | | | |
| Communications | | | | | | |
| Golf Life | \$9,000 | \$9,720 | \$9,720 | \$9,720 | \$9,720 | \$8,000 |
| Other photography | \$611 | \$500 | \$0 | \$500 | \$500 | \$500 |
| Subtotal Communications | \$9,611 | \$10,220 | \$9,720 | \$10,220 | \$9,720 | \$8,500 |
| Advertising | | | | | | |
| Travcom Visitor Map | \$625 | \$0 | \$0 | \$650 | \$650 | \$650 |
| Mountain Lake Publishing | \$1,455 | \$1,571 | \$1,455 | \$1,455 | \$1,440 | \$1,512 |
| Vacation Guide Mag. 3 ed. | | | | | | |
| Clayton Tribune, Mt. Traveler z | \$1,290 | \$1,343 | \$1,328 | \$1,440 | \$1,328 | \$1,440 |
| Rabun County Traveler Guide | \$400 | \$435 | \$0 | \$435 | \$600 | \$630 |
| POA Mailing Expenses | | | | | | \$200 |
| Clayton Tribune Business Line | \$65 | \$70 | 0 | \$75 | \$75 | \$80 |
| Pawss4life Calendar ad | | \$50 | 0 | \$55 | \$55 | \$60 |
| 250 Yrs Tshirt -Volunteers | | | | | | \$1,000 |
| Other advertising T shirts | | | | | | \$2,100 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Subtotal Advertising | \$4,085 | \$3,739 | \$2,783 | \$4,110 | <u>\$4,018</u> | \$7,022 |
| General Supplies and Materials | | | | | | |
| Hay Bale Materials | \$227 | \$350 | \$243 | \$350 | \$77.86 | \$400 |
| Visitor Center, goodie bags, banners | \$368 | \$250 | \$0 | \$600 | \$183 | \$600 |
| Subtotal General Supplies and Materials | \$596 | \$600 | \$243 | \$950 | \$250.86 | \$1,000 |
| Sky Valley Promotions | | | | | | |
| T shirts | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,000 | \$1,976.50 | |
| Meals, cleaning hosting media | \$400 | \$1,300 | \$100 | \$2,810 | <u>\$1,512.36</u> | \$3,200 |
| Gift apparel | \$307 | \$300 | \$80 | \$480 | \$58.30 | \$400 |
| Golf goodie bags | \$180 | \$200 | \$289 | \$400 | | |
| Subtotal s Promotions | \$887 | \$3,050 | \$469 | \$5,690 | \$3,547.16 | \$3,600 |
| Total expenses prior to miscellaneous | \$15,179 | \$17,619 | \$13,215 | \$20,970 | \$17,816.02 | \$20,122 |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | | | | | | |
| | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,434 | \$2,962.73 | \$5,318.41 |
| Total expenses | \$14,808 | \$19,619 | \$13,215 | \$26,404 | \$20,508.75 | \$25,440.41 |
| Unallocated funds | \$0 | \$0 | \$6,404 | \$0 | | \$0 |