

Matthew Tortorice

From: Matthew Tortorice
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 6:41 PM
To: Eric Hutchins; Anthony Irwin; Paul Irwin; City Council
Subject: Re: Request To Be March 2nd Agenda

Mr. Hutchins,

Thank you for your email and for your stated commitment to transparency, accountability, and civility. Those are values my administration shares.

From your conversation yesterday with Jill, my understanding was that you intended to address the Council during the public comment portion of the March 2 meeting rather than requesting placement as a scheduled agenda item. Since your email indicates a formal agenda request, please clarify your preference. I will review whether placement on a future agenda is feasible in accordance with the City's established meeting procedures.

Regardless of format, I am happy to provide whatever financial information your client is requesting.

With respect to the assertion that "nearly \$2.5 million has been spent in less than three months," that figure lacks context and does not accurately reflect the City's financial position or operations.

For clarity:

- A substantial portion of expenditures during the current fiscal year represent prior-year obligations incurred before this administration took office. These are not new discretionary expenditures.
- A significant percentage of current spending consists of restricted or project-specific funds (including capital and grant-related expenditures), not general operating expenses.
- All expenditures are processed through established financial controls and remain subject to audit and reporting requirements under Alabama law.
- This administration has transitioned the City to improved financial tracking and reporting systems and has begun publishing financial updates for public review.

For a detailed breakdown of fiscal year activity through Month 5, I would encourage you and your client to review:

<https://www.mattortorice.com/margaret-financial-update-fy2026-month-5/>

That report outlines operational spending, capital expenditures, holdover obligations, anticipated reimbursements, and our budget status relative to the fiscal year timeline.

In addition, as I have publicly explained, this administration is actively cleaning up and reconstructing the City's financial systems following years of inconsistent reporting and structural deficiencies. We are modernizing our accounting processes, reconciling prior records, and establishing reliable reporting protocols. For context on that work:

<https://www.mattortorice.com/building-the-foundation-a-financial-transparency-series/>

Transparency is achieved through documented, line-item financial disclosure - not headline figures removed from context.

For a broader perspective, the prior administration expended approximately \$5,000,000 over the previous fiscal year, much of it without an adopted budget framework or clear council authorization. As the City's current budget is built off, the actual expenditures from FY2024 and a brief review of 2025. Our focus now is stabilizing operations, restoring reporting discipline, and implementing structural oversight to ensure long-term financial integrity.

Out of respect for ongoing financial reviews and compliance matters, I will not comment on any issues that may implicate investigative or audit processes, as we are about to begin a forensic audit of the last five years for the court and city. However, I remain fully committed to ensuring the City's finances are handled lawfully and transparently.

If Margaret Concerned Citizens is seeking clarity, I am prepared to provide the last five fiscal years of financial records for review, so concerns may be evaluated in full context rather than through isolated figures. If you would like to submit specific line-item questions in advance of the meeting, that would allow for a more productive discussion grounded in documented data. I would hope with my willingness to share this information that you and or your client would be willing to publicly share your findings as well.

It is important that council meetings remain orderly and constructive. Public meetings should facilitate informed discussion - not disruption for its own sake - and I trust your client's stated goals align with that principle.

Please advise whether you prefer:

- Public comment on March 2;
- Placement on a future agenda; or
- Receipt of financial documents in advance for review.

I remain committed to a fact-based discussion grounded in complete financial data.

Respectfully,



Matt Tortorice
Mayor, City of Margaret

From: Eric Hutchins <hutchlaw07@gmail.com>

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 8:37 AM

To: Matthew Tortorice <mayor@margaretal.gov>, Eric Hutchins <hutchlaw07@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Request To Be March 2nd Agenda

Dear Mayor Tortorice and City Clerk:

My name is Eric Hutchins. I am the attorney for a local civic/public interest organization named Margaret Concerned Citizens ("MCC"). I am writing in order to request that I be placed on the Agenda for the next City Council Meeting set for March 2nd. I would like to discuss the issue of the City Budget and Spending during your tenure as mayor. It is the belief of "MCC" that nearly 2.5 million dollars has been spent by your administration in the span of less than 3 months. MCC is committed to the ethos of transparency,

accountability, and civility. If you are unable to place me on the March 2nd Agenda then I kindly ask that this request be noted as a request to be placed on the agenda for the next council meeting. Feel free to contact me at (256)794-4857 or email me at hutchlaw07@gmail.com. I look forward to working with you and the council in accomplishing the goal of my client, MCC: transparency, accountability, and civility in governance.

Sincerely and In the Name of Jesus Christ,

Eric Tavaris Hutchins, Esq.