



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Meeting Minutes

November 06, 2023, 6:00 PM

Gary McCullough Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision – Dahlonega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlonega, a City of Excellence, will provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability, in full partnership with the people who choose to live, work, and visit. Through this commitment, we respect and uphold our rural Appalachian setting to honor our thriving community of historical significance, academic excellence, and military renown.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Taylor called the November 6th City Council meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

Mayor Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor
Councilmember Ron Larson
Councilmember Roman Gaddis
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma
Councilmember Ryan Reagin
Councilmember Ross Shirley
Councilmember Lance Bagley

PRAYER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Mayor Taylor asked Councilmember Larson to lead everyone in prayer and Councilmember Ariemma to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Taylor explained to the public that this is a mechanism by which things have already been discussed thoroughly in the Work Session by the City Council and can then be put on a Consent Agenda to be voted on in one grouping. Councilmembers can move things on and off the consent agenda at this meeting.

1. 2024 Meeting Dates - Public Notice - Strategic Priority #3 - Communication
Mary Csukas, City Clerk
2. Contract Renewal - Jarrard Water Services (JWS) – Strategic Priority #1 - Infrastructure
Allison Martin, City Manager
3. Renewal of Probation Contract
Doug Parks, City Attorney

4. 2024 Agreement for Tourism Development Services – Strategic Priority #3 - Communication
Allison Martin, Finance Director
5. 2024 Agreement for Tourism Development Services – Strategic Priority #3 – Communication, Allison Martin, Finance Director

Mayor Taylor motioned to approve the consent agenda but to table item five, the 2024 Agreement for Tourism Development Services, until the December Council meeting.

Councilmember Ariemma motioned to approve the consent agenda as stated but to include pulling off the Mailbox Ordinance for discussion. Seconded by Councilmember Larson.

Mayor Taylor requests to move item number three, Mailbox Ordinance, to Ordinances and Resolutions as item 5a and then move Zoning Map Amendment to 5b.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

PUBLIC COMMENT – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Mr. Ostaszewski commented publicly and suggested a crosswalk between South Chestatee and Arcadia Street. He asked what his next steps would be to get this done.

Mr Gribben made a public comment about multiple concerns with the City.

Mr.Feagin made a public comment concerning the police department during festivals.

Mayor Taylor made a comment reminding all of the City Council candidates that tomorrow is election day and that if they are successful at winning a post on City Council, it is tradition that one of their pants legs will be cut off after the election. The results will be at the elections office on Tuesday night.

Councilmember Bagley welcomed Mr. Ostaszewski to the community and congratulated him on his new business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. City Council Meeting Minutes - October 2, 2023 - Strategic Priority #3 - Communication
Sarah Hunsinger, Assistant City Clerk
- b. City Council Work Session Minutes – October 16th, 2023 – Strategic Priorities #3 - Communication
Sarah Hunsinger, Assistant City Clerk

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2023, and the City Council Work Session Minutes of October 16th, 2023.

Motion made by Councilmember Bagley, Seconded by Councilmember Larson.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION:

1. Appointment of Assistant City Clerk – Sarah Hunsinger – Strategic Priority #3 Communication
Mary Csukas, City Clerk

Mayor Taylor swore in Sarah Hunsinger in the position of Assistant City Clerk.

Mayor Taylor congratulated Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger on her new position. She

states that a City Clerk's job is to install record retention and retain all the materials that come through the City. They are the ones responsible for issuing and helping with alcohol licenses and making sure they go to the right organizations. Right now, they are doing a heavy-lifting project. She states that there are multiple boxes in this building and other buildings in town, and our City clerks are digitizing all of the paperwork and digitizing it. Therefore, we no longer have to worry about a fire burning essential documents, making it easier for us to look for things when needed. She goes on to welcome Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger on board officially.

2. Proclamation - Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame, Inc

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Mayor Taylor read the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame, Inc. proclamation to the audience.

Mayor Taylor said this proclamation was delivered to the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame. Mayor Taylor thanked them for their service and endeavors to help the new people in the ROTC program at universities with their scholarships.

3. 2023 Community Helping Place Holiday Ornament

Melissa G. Line, LMSW, Executive Director, Community Helping Place

Mayor Taylor said they are blessed to have some wonderful charitable organizations in this community. She says they are happy to host the Community Helping Place, Mrs. Melissa Line, to unveil the 2023 Community Helping Place Holiday Ornament.

Mrs. Line states they are very excited to share this year's ornament. She says sharing something with so much history and heritage in Dahlonega is exciting. This year's ornament is the Meaders Building. It is the mint green building home to Connie's Ice Cream Shop, Habersham Winery, and the Hoyle Law firm. She states this is a true celebration of inheritance and all the wonderful things that Dahlonega has to share. This ornament is our annual fundraiser that supports our work through our food pantry, free clinic, and other operations we offer. She thanks Mayor Taylor and the City Council for allowing them to be here and do this. They are available online through the Community Helping Place Office, the Fudge Factory, Connie's Icecream Shop, The Humble Candle, Crown and Bear, Hairworks, Cranberry Corners, and Captin D's.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CITY REPORTS:

4. Financial Report - September 2023 (presented as unaudited)

Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin stated that this report is presented as unaudited. Sales tax collections remain strong, reflecting collections 7.54% greater than FY22. Insurance Premium Tax is 24% greater than last fiscal year. Alcoholic Beverage Tax and License revenue is greater than in previous years. Permit revenue is also greater than in previous years. Department expenditures are in line with budget expectations. Downtown Development Authority results are on track with the budget. As the budget was programmed to use fund balance, there is no concern with the lag in revenues for this fund. Hotel/Motel Tax Fund collections have remained higher than in previous years. FY23 now trends 1.77% greater than FY22 and is still 69.82% higher than pre-pandemic collections. Water and sewer sales are trending along with budget projections. Revenue from water sales and sewer charges is 6.18% more than last year and 6.28% greater than pre-pandemic numbers. All department expenses are in line with the budget. Solid Waste Fun Refuse Collection Charges are revenues that are 1.89% greater than the prior year. Expenses meet budget expectations. Stormwater Enterprize

Fund is meeting budget expectations. Expenses are related to the startup of the new utility, projects, and allocated staff pay and benefits.

Councilmember Ariemma asked where Jarrard Water Services would go under.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

5. Mailbox Ordinance 2023-06

Doug Parks, City Attorney

Mayor Taylor entertained a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson to approve Ordinance 2023-09 as presented, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Councilmember Ariemma asked what people should do with their existing mailboxes. He asked if there would be a right to rebuild it if it gets ruined.

Councilmember Larson suggested to table this item.

Councilmember Gaddis said they are doing this because one of our employees got hurt. He asks what our liability is if this happens again.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson to act on the motion that is on the table, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

Voting Nay: Councilmember Ariemma

6. Zoning Map Amendment - (Parcel No. D11-033) Ordinance 2023-09

Doug Parks, City Attorney

The applicant is requesting to rezone a 0.261+ acre property on Meaders Street from R-1: Single Family Residential District to R-3: Multiple Family Residential District for the purpose of utilizing the existing single-family residence as a personal vacation home and short-term rental property, with conditions. Short-term rentals within the R-1 zoning district, as defined in Article VIII, are not permitted to be used, resulting in the rezoning request. The staff report calls for the council to determine the compatibility of short-term rentals with the existing development pattern and with the adjacent neighborhood. Subject to that determination being made, the attached pro forma ordinance suggests several conditions to be imposed.

Mayor Taylor sought a motion from the council.

Councilmember Larson made a motion to approve based on compatible information provided in the ordinance.

Mayor Taylor stated that since there was no Second, the motion died.

A motion was made by Councilmember Gaddis to table this pending the TSW consultants' review, seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:

OTHER ITEMS:

7. 2024 Alcoholic Beverage License Renewals – Strategic Priority #3 Communications

Mary Csukas, City Clerk & Doug Parks, City Attorney

Mayor Taylor entertained a motion from the council.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis to approve the alcoholic beverage licenses listed on the 2023 Alcoholic Beverage License Renewal by Class List, Seconded by

Councilmember Larson.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

8. Executive Session - Real Estate

No action was taken.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

City Clerk Csukas had no comments.

City Manager Martin had no comments.

City Attorney Parks congratulated staff on this year's alcohol license process.

City Council Comments -

Councilmember Shirley reminded everyone of the Veterans Day Parade this weekend and stated that the staff had started decorating the square for Christmas and that the team was doing great.

Councilmember Ariemma congratulated Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger on her position.

Councilmember Gaddis states that the Lumpkin County Education Foundation has their annual fundraiser for a chance to win \$5,000. You can buy a ticket for two for dinner or a chance.

Councilmember Larson congratulated Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger. He reminded everyone that the Sunrise Rotary Club had a Battle of the Badges fundraiser. He asked everyone to have City Marshal Alberts in the Favorite Pet Contest.

Councilmember Reagin congratulated Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger and hoped everyone remembers Veterans Day.

Councilmember Bagley congratulated Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger and Lumpkin County Football on their success.

Mayor Taylor had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 P.M.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley