



# CITY OF DAHLONEGA COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

**APRIL 20, 2020 4:00 PM**

Present – Zoom Mayor Sam Norton Council Member Roman Gaddis Council Member Mitchell Ridley Council Member Ron Larson Council Member JoAnne Taylor Council Member Helen Hardman Council Member Johnny Ariemma	Present – Zoom City Manager Bill Schmid City Clerk Mary Csukas Director Melody Marlowe Director Kevin Herrit Director Mark Buchanan Marshal Jeff Branyon	Present – Zoom City Attorney Doug Parks Director Shannon Ferguson DDA Program Assistant Cari McDuffie Tourism Director Sam McDuffie Chamber President Robb Nichols
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Mayor Norton called the Work Session to order at 4:03 p.m.

**BOARDS & COMMITTEES:**

1. Cemetery Committee March 2020, Chris Worick, Cemetery Committee Chairman
  - o Chairman Worick completed repairs to the damaged tombstones in Mt. Hope Cemetery. New video assistance capabilities are in place to monitor the cemetery grounds, and the gates are now functional.
2. Downtown Development Authority - March 2020, Shannon Ferguson, Executive Director
  - o Downtown Development Authority reserve funds will be discussed during the COVID 19 Budget Amendment topic later in the Work Session.
3. Main Street- March 2020, Carolyn McDuffie, Main Street Project Coordinator
  - o Budget reductions are separate from possible grant programs for the Main Street Program.
4. Tourism Board - March 2020, Director, Sam McDuffie
  - o Camera Ready and Facebook views available on YouTube.
  - o The Visitors Guide digital copy is expected this week, with physical copies next week.
  - o Fox Sports Southeast airing first episode of the Excursion with David Zelsky on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. with the second episode on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - o Our budget reduction process is currently underway.
  - o Sam McDuffie expressed expectations that hotels and Airbnb will rebound in Summer.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

1. City Marshal - March 2020, Jeff Branyon, Marshal
  - o Marshal's department is working safely during this pandemic.
  - o Mayor Norton and Council thanked the Marshal and his department for their dedication to the job.
2. Community Development – March 2020, Kevin Herrit, Director
  - o Open Gov permitting will be reviewed with contractors via Zoom meetings.
  - o Council Member Larson suggested that the Nugget outlines our updated permitting software in an upcoming edition of the Nugget.

3. Financial Services – March 202, Melody Marlowe, Finance Director
  - o BSA software program training completed this coming week.
  - o Mayor Norton thanked the staff for all the hard work on implementing the new financial software during this pandemic.
4. Public Works Department – March 2020, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer
  - o Cost savings implemented at City projects by using in-house staff.
  - o Mayor Norton thanked the department for their diligence to keep our budget low.
  - o The City Park project work to begin soon.
5. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department - March 2020, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director
  - o Owen Farms lift station is up and running, and the Achasta lift station project is underway.

#### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. Budget Forecast 2020, Bill Schmid, City Manager
  - o Presentations on the COVID Budget Amendment outlined a changeable plan that will continue to evolve over the next 18 months. In conjunction with the budget amendments, staff will also begin the creation of the FY20201 budget.
  - o Mayor Norton and Council agree, public accessibility to the budget amendments are crucial; Director of Communication, Shannon Ferguson, will keep the flow of information on track.
  - o Council praised City Manager Schmid and Director Marlowe for the exemplary work on the budget amendment.
2. Utility Billing Late Fees and Disconnection of Services, Melody Marlowe, Finance Director
  - o Staff is recommending a suspension of service disconnection, reconnection fees, penalties, and interest for a temporary period.
  - o Council agreed that we should give utility accounts a 60 days reprieve and the ability to pay over six months; BS&A financial software will assist with managing fees and payment plans.
3. Sign Proposal Cottrell Park, Bill Schmid, City Manager
  - o Ken Crowe is looking to include sidewalk, along Morrison Moore Pkwy and waterline project in the Cottrell sign project. The sidewalk aspects of this project will be at their cost.
  - o Council Member Ridley stated that this sidewalk would create a total loop that is over three miles with UNG and City of Dahlonge; Council Member Ridley spearheaded the idea of this project months ago.
  - o Mayor Norton instructed City Manager Schmid to memorialize the Cottrell sign project with UNG to include the waterline and sidewalk aspects.

#### **COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES**

Clerk Comments - No comments

City Manager Comments

- o We are encouraged by the Governor's press conference and its possible outcome.

City Attorney Comments

- o The Governors Order is comprehensive and sweeping. The City Attorney's office will create a straight forward bullet document, that will be available on the City Website to include a phone number for the Governor's Office in Atlanta.

#### City Council Comments

- Council Member Hardman praised Director Marlowe, City Manager Schmid, and Staff on all their hard work in these last few weeks.
- Council Member Taylor approved the support of tourism development.
- Council Member Ariemma is motivated with opening our local economy and thanked the staff and everyone for such a comprehensive budget.
- Council Member Ridley is ready for council meetings in City Chambers.
- Council Member Gaddis is concerned with a 2<sup>nd</sup> spike in the coronavirus.

#### Mayor Comments-

- Mayor Norton believes the communication of the recent order by Governor Kemp is crucial.

#### Public comments

- Allyson Roach requested clarification on the Governor's remarks at his conference today at 4:00 p.m. The City will place the bullet points of the Governor's Conference on our website by the end of the day tomorrow.

Mayor Norton closed the Work Session at 5:23 p.m.