



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

May 15, 2023, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council 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 - To be an open, honest, and responsive city, balancing preservation, growth, and delivering quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of Dahlonega's resources.

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Taylor called the City Council Work Session to order at 4:05 PM

PRESENT

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the amended agenda by removing the appointment of the vacancy on the Planning Commission.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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

BOARD & COMMITTEES

No new information

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT: <https://dahlonega.gov/category/department-reports/>

Councilmember Ariemma listed concerns about loud mufflers in the city. Chief Albert responded with plans to continue addressing this problem throughout the City.

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION : (Vote at Council Meeting)

1. Planning Commission Vacancy – Appoint Member JoAnne Taylor, Mayor
This item will be addressed at a future meeting.

PRESENTATION

2. FY22 Annual Audit Presentation, Rushton and Company, CPA; Chris Hollifield
Chris Hollifield presented essential factors during the FY September 30, 2022, Annual Audit Presentation. In the audit presentation, he outlined the City of Dahlonega's responsibilities and the responsibilities of Ruston and Company during the audit. He

discussed finances, operating expansion, city funds, assigned and unassigned fund balance, and projected growth. He displayed significant financial graphs for the last five years. He reviewed GASB 96, GASB 91, and GASB 101. GASB 96 will have the most important effect of these three statements.

Councilmember Ariemma questioned the placement of debt service. Mr. Hollifield stated that debt service is not paid directly from the general operating fund but from funds such as water service.

Mayor Taylor questioned if the increase in revenue was due to the ARPA funds. Mr. Hollifield stated it mainly came from the general fund due to LOST, as ARPA is in a different fund.

City Manager Martin will send the Council and Mayor a schedule of investments (treasury bills).

Councilmember Shirley questioned what an example of GASB 91 would be. City Manager Martin responded that the Head House lease agreement is an example of GASB91.

Mayor Taylor appreciated the excellent audit presentation by the Ruston Firm. Mayor Taylor thanked the finance department for all their excellence in keeping the city in very good solid financial standing through clean reporting by a staff that works tirelessly to ensure we operate in such excellent financial shape.

Councilmember Gaddis questioned the decrease in property taxes, and City Manager Martin informed Council that the decrease was due to inflation and exemptions.

Councilmember Ariemma questioned the restricted growth line item: unassigned funds moved into 2023 with many available funds. Mr. Hollifield discussed these available unassigned funds that are in good shape due to diligence in keeping this money for future capital projects approved by Council.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

No new ordinances and resolutions.

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS

3. Project # 2023-009 North Grove Sidewalk Construction, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Project Manager

Capital Project Manager Hunsinger informed the council of sidewalk, curb, and cutter construction along East Main/ Street and North Grove Street intersection, all the way to Subway.

4. Servline Leak Protection Program, Allison Martin, City Manager

As a courtesy, the city partially adjusts the bill for both water and sewer when a request for a leak adjustment is submitted. On average, the city makes 150 adjustments annually. The amount of the adjustment varies per account, but this results in not only lost revenue for the city but leaves the customer with dissatisfaction and, in some cases, a payment plan to cover their portion of the leak. Staff researched other water/sewer utility providers and requested the council consider offering, as an opt-out program, to our customers the ServLine Leak Protection Program. Not only will this program unburden our staff from administering the leak adjustment process, but it will also help us recapture lost revenue and bad debt associated with customer water leaks.

Customers that opt out of the program assume all liability associated with leaks and would receive no adjustment to their account for water that flows through the meter due to a leak on their side of the service. The water service costs \$1.89/month for a \$500 limit of protection for water leaks and \$1.70/month for a \$500 limit of protection for sewer leaks.

Commercial rates were also offered, but those occur so rarely that the council may wish not to offer this service.

Mayor Taylor questioned if the city would be held responsible for any damage. There is no adverse financial impact on the city with this program. Our customers bear the program's cost on an opt-out basis in an amount that averages about 3.95 a month.

The council discussed the process for implementing this program and its effect on the citizens and the city.

5. CPL Consulting Proposal, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin made a recommendation to use a local firm that has Community Development experience after the departure of our Community Development Director. It was discussed that our recent placement as the 2nd fastest growing county in Georgia begs for a solution to the workings of the Community Development Department. One option is to have a professional on the property to handle this job while we evaluate this department and its needs for the City of Dahlonega. Using a professional firm with staff trained in planning is very beneficial. CPL Consulting Proposal reflects on-call status and an exhibit of hourly rates.

6. Charles Abbott and Associates – Agreement for Services, Allison Martin, City Manager

Charles Abbott and Associates currently handle the city's commercial inspections and plan processes. They approached the City of Dahlonega, looking to expand their services by including residential inspections and plan processing. The idea is to change our fee schedule to adopt the industry standards. They do not do local soil aeration.

The city recommendation is to move the current residential inspector to code enforcement and allow two code enforcement officers to increase our code enforcement in the future. This has an almost zero impact as permit fees generally are at cost and not profit for this department. The split administrative position between the Police Department and Community Development will now assign this position to the Police Department under this new plan. If we decide to go this path, this new structure will allow the City Clerk's office to accept anything related to tax or license, such as occupational taxes, as done in the past. This will enable us to streamline our processes and give better customer service. The next step is to update our master fee schedule for the Council to review.

Charles Abbott will now include a second inspector with this plan.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments – Ms. Csukas reminded Mayor Taylor and the City Council of their retreat in Canton on Friday, May 19, 2023, and Saturday, May 20, 2023, for strategic purposes.

City Manager Comments – No comments

City Council Comments:

Councilmember Shirley thanked City Manager Martin for the excellent audit reports.

Councilmember Ariemma has no comments.

Councilmember Gaddis had no comments.

Councilmember Larson had no comments.

Councilmember Reagin had no comments.

Councilmember Bagley commented on the memorial markers that honor our veterans placed throughout the City. Next weekend, on May 20th and 21st, is the Arts and Wine Festival. He also reminded Mr. Vince Hunsinger to watch out for the memorial makers during any construction of the sidewalks. The women's UNG softball team was congratulated on their recent placement in the super regional game.

City Attorney Comments - no comments.

Mayor Comments - no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the Work Session at 5:08 PM.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Ariemma.

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