



# CITY OF DAHLONEGA Council Meeting Minutes

October 07, 2024, 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.

---

## PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor

Councilmember Johnny Ariemma

Councilmember Lance Bagley

Councilmember Dan Brown

Councilmember Roman Gaddis

Councilmember Ross Shirley

## CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

## PRAYER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Councilmember Ariemma led the invocation and Councilmember Bagley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion Made by Councilmember Shirley. Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Gaddis

## APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Ariemma

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Shirley

## UCBI Banking Service Contract Renewal

Kimberly Stafford, Finance Manager

Intergovernmental Service Agreement–Downtown Development Authority

Allison Martin, City Manager

Strategic Priority - Effectively Manage Growth

Gulf Food and Gas INC bda Gulf Food Mart - Retail Alcoholic Beverage License

Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk & Doug Parks, City Attorney

Change to Open Container Footprint - Spirits Tavern Feral Cat Program Fundraiser

Doug Parks, City Attorney & Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT – FOUR MINUTE LIMIT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Shirley noted that one section of the vote on Item B. was omitted.

Motion Made by Councilmember Shirley to approve all items except Item B. Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Gaddis

- a. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes - June 27, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- b. City Council Special Called Meeting - August 19, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- c. City Council Special Called Meeting Minutes - July 22, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- d. Council Work Session Meeting Minutes - July 22, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- e. City Council Meeting Minutes - August 5, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- f. City Council Public Hearing Minutes - August 5, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CITY REPORTS:

1. Financial Report - August 2024  
Allison Martin, City Manager

Manager Martin reported that the current review of the financial reports reflect a strong sales tax collection, and alcohol runs greater than last fiscal year. Hotel/Motel tax is nine percent higher than last fiscal year and stormwater revenue is trending on track. The Downtown Development Authority fund is on track as well with the use of their fund balance. Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the report.

Motion Made by Councilmember Bagley, Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Shirley

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:

2. Employee Benefits Program  
City Manager, Allison Martin

Manager Martin reported along with the City's insurance representative on the options regarding the employee benefits program. Manager Martin stated that normally staff does not make recommendations on employee benefits, however in this case with such a drastic change in cost, staff recommends remaining with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). She

recommended developing a more robust wellness plan for staff. The other options included a self-insured option, insuring with United Healthcare that does not cover Northeast Georgia Health Systems, or to remain with GMA but change staff's deductible options. She also reported that the city could offer a Health Savings Account option. Councilmember Gaddis asked about a compensation plan, and Councilmember Bagley emphasized the importance of educating staff on the best way to use their plans. Councilmember Ariemma stated that staying with the current plan protects City employees. Mayor Taylor asked if the Council would reconsider a rollback in the case of continued insurance increases. Councilmember Ariemma stated that would be appropriate.

Motion Made to Approve remaining with the current plan held by the City of Dahlonega with the Georgia Municipal Association by Councilmember Shirley. Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Gaddis.

3. Koyo Lift Station Rehab Buy American Change Order

Allison Martin, City Manager

Strategic Priority - Infrastructure

Manager Martin reported that the City received federal funding through the Environmental Protection Agency to rehabilitate the Koyo lift station. One stipulation of the funds is that the City must buy American materials. A change order is required to cover the cost of American steel.

Motion Made to Approve by Councilmember Brown, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Gaddis

OTHER ITEMS:

Mayor Taylor asked Manager Martin for an update on the South Park Street infrastructure project. Manager Martin reported that the project is progressing on schedule, and the crews are currently working on laying stormwater lines.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments

No comment.

City Manager Comments

Manager Martin stated that City Hall will be hosting GMA revenue classes in October. She also reported that City Staff would be participating in the Lumpkin County School System's Safe School sidewalk walk and making note of areas of improvement.

City Attorney Comments

No comment.

City Council Comments

Councilmember Ariemma thanked staff for their work on the insurance topic. He stated that the City looks great. Councilmember Bagley stated that the scarecrows around the square look amazing and thanked the staff for their work on the program. He also reported that the Wall that Heals will be displayed at the University of North Georgia at the end of the month.

Councilmember Brown thanked staff for the data regarding insurance options and for the City's quick emergency operations preparation in anticipation of the hurricane. Councilmember Gaddis stated that the new website looks great. Councilmember Shirley thanked the DDA staff for a successful First Friday Concert series, and asked staff to investigate noise ordinances regarding vehicle noise. He also stated that he is concerned with vehicle speeds on Boyd Circle.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Taylor thanked City and County staff for the hurricane preparation. She also thanked staff for their attention to ensuring all vital City facilities have generators in the event that they lose power.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Motion Made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

VOTING YEA: Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Gaddis

---

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlonega will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlonega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!

---