



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

July 18, 2022, 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, and growth, and delivering quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of Dahlonega's resources.

PRESENT

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

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 405 p.m.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

Mayor Taylor reminded the community of the rise in COVID numbers in Lumpkin County. She also suggested changes to Cemetery permitting. She feels it would be wise to change the permit language concerning the families and safety standpoint to disallow tours during active burials. The city would be responsible for contacting the business owner to notify them. There are limited burials in Mount Hope Cemetery.

1. Cemetery Committee—June 2022

Chris Worick, Committee Chairman

2. Downtown Dahlonega Report – June 2022

Ariel Alexander, Downtown Dahlonega Manager

Manager Alexander indicated there was nothing to add to the report and noted the change in the report's design to the Main Street style. Council and Manager Alexander discussed resources and collaboration on parking, the EDGE program, and a walkabout with Council and board members.

TOURISM: Sam McDuffie, Tourism Director

No report was presented.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

3. Community Development – June 2022

Jameson Kinley, Planning and Zoning Administrator

4. Finance and Administration Department - June 2022

Allison Martin, Finance Director

5. Police Department - June 2022

George Albert, Chief

6. Public Works—June 2022

Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer

7. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report June 2022

John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director

Mayor Taylor indicated the department reports are received electronically and asked if there were questions about the reports. Council discussed prospects for new development, police work, Pine Tree Way development plans, and the 147 N Park Street property.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

8. Ordinance 2022-10: An ordinance to provide for further clarification regarding prohibited signage

Doug Parks, City Attorney

Mayor Taylor introduced the item and advised the action taken would be to send the item to the Planning Commission. City Attorney Parks indicated he was asked to consider this resolution to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

9. Housing Needs Assessment, JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Mayor Taylor asked for thoughts and recommendations on this study. Mayor Taylor indicated she added several items- assessment of professional housing, short-term rental-where and how to govern them, the deficit of workforce housing, and affordable single-family housing. Council commented on sharing the cost of the study with UNG based on their increase in enrollment numbers and the impact on the housing, comparison cities, adding looking at the area's topography, and reviewing the items requested to be looked at. Mayor Taylor indicated she would work to include the suggested changes and wanted to put them on the Agenda for a vote.

10. Councilmember Reports from GMA Conference

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Mayor Taylor invited anyone who went to the GMA conference to share their experience.

Councilmember Bagley indicated he was impressed with the support to help us succeed. He appreciated the ability to talk to other council members and Mayors and share the same issues we do. He was highly pleased with the classes and talking with other people.

Councilmember Reagin stated he had a few classes, and his favorite was Entrepreneurship, and he was excited to discuss the EDGE program with Manager Alexander and Administrator Kinley. He discussed tax rebates for new businesses on which he would like more information to assist in property and business development.

Councilmember Larson indicated this was his 5th or 6th GMA session in Savannah. He felt it was great to meet with colleagues and is thankful for our professionalism. His bring back was the LOST sharing revenues and how every 1% of the tax makes a difference of approximately \$50,000. The impact of this is very significant.

Councilmember Ariemma indicated he took a class on Annexations and got good information. He also spoke of the course on Citizen Engagement; the main point was the relationship with the press to get information out. He recommended doing more with the residents outside the chambers.

Councilmember Shirley stated he felt it was informative and very well run. After taking the class on water and wastewater, he was very impressed with how well the city runs. We don't have some of the challenges others see. We do very well with our open meetings.

Mayor Taylor stated she had the personal privilege of speaking on the main stage about literacy. She shared the programs we have, such as reading to dogs and the Lumpkin Literacy Coalition, which provides a book a month. As a result, the Executive Director of the statewide organization for preparing children to attend school, Mindy Binderman, wants to visit our community in November. We are interested in approaches taken not only for children but also for adults.

Mayor Taylor also announced the pedestrian bridge over the reservoir had drawn interest from people who wanted to assist with possible grant money. This project is for public safety and public walkability, and a visit is planned for the near future.

Councilmember Gaddis indicated that although he did not attend this conference, he was at a conference for work in Savannah, where the discussion was on the vulnerability of small governments to nation states actively trying to infiltrate our networks and systems. This needs to be something always on our radar.

11. Local Option Sales Tax - Joint Agreement Discussion

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Mayor Taylor stated Councilmember Shirley had been part of the process and invited him to join any time.

Mayor Taylor stated the status is to remain at the current split. She explained they presented all the statistics to County and have not swayed them to date. She indicated there is still discussion time for LOST discussions with the County, but they are firm in their assessment.

Councilmember Shirley reminded the council there were eight criteria, the City was well represented, and a lot of time was put into presenting our case. We have done as well as possible.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

City Clerk Csukas had no additional comments.

Manager Lewis expressed he was enjoying his time back and continues to be impressed with the staff.

City Attorney Parks reminded the council of the package store deadline one week from today. He will then assess and get a final list to Council and then can select a licensee.

Councilmember Larson indicated he was honored to receive a certificate of excellence for 120 hours of training over the last 6.5 years at the GMA Conference. He thanked Mayor Taylor, City Interim Manager Lewis, and Councilmember Ariemma for sitting with him.

Councilmember Ariemma offered congratulations to Ron.

Councilmember Reagin indicated he would like to get with Manager Alexander and Director Csukas to discuss the Bainbridge opportunity.

There were no other Councilmember comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called to adjourn at 4:54 p.m.

Motion made by Councilmember Ariemma, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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