



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

September 18, 2023, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlongega 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 – Dahlongega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlongega, 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.

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Taylor called the City Council Work Session meeting to order at 4:05 P.M.

Mayor Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting

PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor
Councilmember Ron Larson
Councilmember Roman Gaddis
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma
Councilmember Lance Bagley

ABSENT

Councilmember Ryan Reagin
Councilmember Ross Shirley

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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

BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. Cemetery Committee—August 2023, Chris Worick, Chair, Dahlongega Cemetery Committee

Mayor Taylor informed everyone that the cemetery committee is looking for fundraising options to do some work there. She is very excited about the students volunteering to work in the cemetery.

City Engineer Buchanan stated that many students are doing historical work in the cemetery and on 100-year-old headstones.

2. Dahlongega Downtown Development Authority/Main Street – August 2023, Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Director

Councilmember Bagley inquired into existing parking studies that may be underway to assist with downtown parking issues. Councilmember Larson explained that the parking committee is reviewing options for a parking study.

Councilmember Bagley also questioned the signage available for projecting cars into the UNG parking deck and was informed that the signage would be in place once construction was completed. Bagley also asked if anything would be done for Dahlonge's 190th birthday and was told plans were underway for December of this year.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT: <https://dahlonega.gov/category/department-reports/>
APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION, & RECOGNITION: (Vote at Council Meeting)

PRESENTATION: None

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS: None

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS

3. 2024 Employee Benefits Program, Allison Martin, City Manager, and MSI Benefits Group, Inc. Representative

City Manager Martin reviewed the 2024 Employee Benefits Program with the council and Mayor. The initial offer from GMA was at a 10.98% increase, but with discussion, the percentage is now set at a 9.34% increase. The plan is again employee and employer contribution. Council discussed the past and present aspects of our employee benefits programs.

4. Park Street Utility Project Award, Allison Martin, City Manager & Mark Buchanan, Director of Engineering

City Engineer Buchanan reviewed the Park Street Utility Project Award staff and recommended awarding the portion of the project described as Division I to Strickland & Sons Pipeline. The bid amount shown is just over \$4.5m. Staff also recommend carrying a 10% contingency for this project, which makes the amount needed \$4,950,000.

The staff has reviewed this project and, at this time, believes the appropriate action is to move forward with Division I of the project, more commonly referred to as the South Park Street area. This project received funds from ARPA of \$2,723,845 and additional funds from GDOT of \$250,000 for paving. Staff recommends carrying a 10% contingency for this project.

City Manager Martin relayed information about the ongoing project on East Main Street that was slightly delayed due to three change orders from additional underground issues that required work to bust unforeseen concrete on the pipes.

City Engineer Buchanan discussed the long-term plans to continue the replacement of trees around the square, which is on hold due to the emergency on East Main. There is no current timeline for the tree replacement as of yet.

5. Intergovernmental Service Agreement – Downtown Development Authority, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin reviewed the annual Intergovernmental Service Agreement with the Downtown Development Authority for FY2024 with a change in the dollar amount. The Authority's budget has been established at an amount of \$321,665, of which \$100,000 will be funded from the City's general fund, \$84,875 will be funded from hotel/motel tax collections, and the balance is a mixture of fund reserves of \$128,890 and miscellaneous revenues of \$7,900.

Councilmember Ariemma discussed the fund's allocation.

6. IGA – Lumpkin County & City of Dahlonega Fueling Station Amendment, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin reviewed the IGA – Lumpkin County & City of Dahlonega Fueling Station Amendment with the council and Mayor. Lumpkin County recently installed a DEF pump at the fueling station that the city proposes to use. It will be more efficient for vehicles to fuel and add the DEF as needed at the location rather than carrying DEF with them or returning to the city shop to add it. The formula proposed for the cost share is acceptable and follows along a similar theory as the fuel costs. The county's ability to obtain a price point for bulk purchases, not attainable by the city, will still be realized even with a surcharge—the city already budgets for DEF.

Councilmember Ariemma discussed the formula proposed for use.

7. UCBI Banking Service Contract Renewal, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin reviewed the UCBI Banking Service Contract Renewal with the Council and Mayor. The bank is offering the same terms as last year, which is an interest rate that is based on their internal non-published board rate referred to as "Index 8" minus 0.35%. This rate adjusts at the first of the month and is the same offer given to the County. There is no change to the fees for fraud protection and account services in this renewal. Those fees remain \$400/month. The renewal does allow for an amendment when interest rates stabilize to a more traditional rate paid on a formula basis. With the city's investment plan, staff transfer funds as necessary to maximize the amount of interest earnings on cash reserves while maintaining adequate cash flow for operations and capital projects.

OTHER ITEMS:

8. Dahlonega Food and Gas INC dba/Gulf Food Mart - Retail Alcoholic Beverage License
Mary Csukas, City Clerk & Doug Parks, City Attorney

City Clerk Csukas reviewed the Dahlonega Food and Gas Inc. dba/Gulf Food Mart - Retail Alcoholic Beverage License owned by Mohammed Shabbir, who is requesting an alcoholic beverage license for Package Sales of beer and wine. This establishment operated as Package Sales of Beer and Wine under different ownership in 2022-2023. The application is complete and ready for review by the City Council.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

City Clerk Csukas - no comment

City Manager Martin announced the recent Lunch and Learn for our full-time employees, retirement, and benefits. In October, we plan for a Social Security representative to meet with employees nearing retirement age, and we partnered with the Lumpkin County Health Department to get everyone flu shots.

City Attorney- no comment

City Council Comments

Councilmember Ariemma commented on the sidewalk by his house being redone.

Councilmember Gaddis had no comments

Councilmember Larson had no comments

Councilmember Bagley commented on being in the coolest city in Georgia. The Trail Fest representatives were very complimentary of the City of Dahlonega.

Mayor Taylor had no additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Gaddis.

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