



# CITY OF DAHLONEGA

## Council Work Session Minutes

October 19, 2020, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

<p>PRESENT Mayor Sam Norton Council Member Mitchell Ridley Council Member JoAnne Taylor Council Member Roman Gaddis Council Member Johnny Ariemma Council Member Ron Larson Council Member Helen Hardman</p>	<p>PRESENT City Clerk Mary Csukas City Manager Bill Schmid Director Kevin Herrit Director Melody Marlowe Director Mark Buchanan Superintendent John Jarrard</p>	<p>PRESENT Tourism Director Sam McDuffie Chamber President Robb Nichols</p>
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### OPEN MEETING

Mayor Norton opened the Work Session at 4:08 p.m.

### BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Committee – September 2020, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer  
Director Buchanan informed the Council of the upcoming cemetery cleanup at Mt Hope Cemetery on November 7, 2020, by the Cemetery Committee. The columbarium is on target for completion in the next twelve weeks, with sales discussed in the coming weeks.

### TOURISM:

2. Tourism - September 2020, Sam McDuffie, Director
  - At the recent Tourism Committee meeting, advertising efforts for 2021 were discussed.
  - Our Dahlonega.org new website will be available on October 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Chamber of Commerce will be moving offices from the Visitors Center to the renovated old library building at the County Office complex and will allow the Tourism Board space at this new location at no cost.
  - The Tourism Board would like to have a meeting with both the County and City Officials to discuss the use of the Visitors Center's newly vacated spaces.
  - Mayor Norton and Council discussed the importance of keeping the tourism staff housed within the Visitors Center building. However, Director McDuffie reminded Council that his staff would need more space and could move to the second floor as an option.

### DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

3. City Marshal – September 2020, Jeff Branyon, Chief Marshal  
Marshal Branyon introduced Deputy Marshal Diane Kimmel to the Council.

4. Community Development – September 2020, Kevin Herrit, Director
  - The October 19, 2020 Public Hearing for rezoning of the Hawkins property moved to November 16, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. Voting on this issue is expected on December 7, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.
  - The Downtown Hotel on 40 East Main Street has an opening date near the end of December 2020.
5. Financial Services – September 2020, Melody Marlowe, Finance Director

Director Marlowe informed the Council of a new feature within the BSA software called the shut off wizard. This feature allows for same-day notification of a late fee notice alerting customers to potential water shutoff via email. Staff will still inform customers without emails via a phone call. This service includes accounts with tenant agreements.

Council Member Ridely applauded the City Staff for the personal service given to our customers in this day and age.
6. Public Works – September 2020, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer

Director Buchanan thanked and praised his staff for their diligence and hard work during recent water and sewer leaks and handling the updated hours of operation for solid waste to pickups seven days a week. Christmas decorations are quietly being set each night meet the needs of the upcoming Holiday Season.

The Beautification of Downtown for the Fall Season allows tourist spots for photo ops.
7. Water & Wastewater Treatment - September 2020, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director.
  - Director Jarrard informed Council that the water plant system's health is in good shape, but the system's racks will require filter replacements in the coming months.
  - A sewer leak was discovered in the sewer system by Buck McCallister, WWTP Supervisor, while walking the sewer line. The event is classified as a leak and will incur a fine, not a large fine since the spill is under 10,000 gallons, but a fine never less. The EPD has a no-spill policy unless you have a discharge permit.
  - Testing the water affected by the spill is not required unless the spill is over 10,000 gallons, but we tested both upstream and downstream, which showed an acceptable level in the stream.
  - Council, Mayor, and Staff discussed the need to make lasting repairs to this section of the sewer line, which has repeated issues due to stress in the line.
  - The City Manager has a scheduled meeting with Lumpkin County concerning an after-action report for a recent water leak with County lines.

#### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

8. Vaping Health Crisis, Daniel Thompson, Regional Director of Philanthropy, Georgia Healthy Family Alliance
  - Daniel Thompson and Dr. Richard Wherry gave a presentation on vaping and cigarette usage issues by high school and middle school-age children.
  - School children have vaped in the bathrooms at middle school to high school, causing nicotine damage in young children addicted to nicotine.
  - Both gentlemen are hoping to stop smoking at an early age, but this takes money and human resource support from local government agencies.

- Council discussed the need to review vaping and cigarettes at a young age with other local agencies in Lumpkin County and possibly create joint proclamations and resolutions.
  - Mr. Daniels will send a model resolution and letter of support to the City Clerk for use in this endeavor with the local agencies.
9. Water Distribution Skidsteer Purchase, Ron Simmons, Distribution/Collection Supervisor  
Director Buchanan discussed the need for Council approval to purchase a Skidsteer for the water distribution department. Negotiations by Ron Simmons allowed for a favorable price for this purchase below budget.
10. Columbarium/Ossuaries Pricing, Mark Buchanan, Director  
Director Buchanan is creating an ordinance for the pricing of columbarium's and ossuaries.  
The City of Dahlonega is in the first wave of municipal cemeteries with a columbarium and ossuaries.
11. Nonresidential Solid Waste Exemption Requests, Bill Schmid, City Manager  
Downtown businesses are requesting, of the City Manager, solid waste exemptions.  
Ms. Deb Rowe requested an additional solid waste exemption, the \$40.00 fee, for three restaurants downtown; 19 Degrees North, Shenanigans, and Bourbon Street, as Ms. Rowe set up recycling for business in the downtown area, this service assist with the perforating cardboard in town. The Council praised Ms. Rowe for her efforts to help with the downtown carbon footprint.  
Mayor, Council, and Staff discussed the possibility of nonresidential recycling and exemptions of the mandatory \$40.00 fee associated with solid waste. The new financial software in use has pointed out drastic differences in solid waste billing, and the use of this new program has highlighted and assisted with updating these discrepancies.
12. Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority & Main Street Department, Bill Schmid, City Manager  
Mayor, Council, and Staff discussed the evolution of our Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program and the direction of these programs in the coming months.  
City Manager Schmid is working with an architect on the Head House's renovation design through the Downtown Development Authority, as a historical value for the community.

#### COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments – No comments

City Manager Comments – Cemetery policies are being finalized by staff.

City Attorney Comments – No comments

City Council Comments – Council Member Ridley requested staff ready bottled water for citizens during weather disasters or future water leaks.

Mayor Comments – The city is progressing well at this time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton adjourned the Work Session at 6:24 p.m.