



CITY OF DAHLONEGA Council Work Session - Minutes

July 19, 2021, 4:00 pm

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

PRESENT

Mayor Sam Norton

Council Member Ron Larson

Council Member Mitchel Ridley

Council Member Roman Gaddis

Council Member Johnny Ariemma

Council Member Joel Cordle

ABSENT

Council Member JoAnne Taylor

Mayor Norton opened the Work Session at 4:33 pm

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Committee—June 2021, Chris Worick, Committee Chairman
 - Chairman Worick and the Council discussed the marking and possible memorializing of the almost three hundred unmarked graves discovered by Ground Penetrating Radar earlier this summer.
 - Council reminded attending residents that the columbarium at the Memorial Park Cemetery is open for inurnment and a ceremonial opening is in the future.
2. Main Street – June 2021, Ariel Alexander, Main Street/DDA Staff, Skyler Alexander, Main Street/DDA Staff
 - Business and future DDA projects surveys are being distributed and should be returned by July 30.
 - Development of an available properties list within the DDA boundaries is moving forward.
 - The Wayfinding Sign program is under review.

TOURISM: Monthly Report - June 2021, Sam McDuffie, Director of Tourism

- The Welcome Center hosted 16,457 visitors in June and 3686 visitors during the July 4th weekend.
- Dahlonega tourism advertisement is on 680 AM, NPR, and GPTV
- We have filled the Communication Coordinator position.
- USA Today's ten best wine regions voting is open, and Dahlonega Plateau is #5. Visit the Discover Dahlonega page to vote.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. Finance and Administration Department – June 2021, Allison Martin, Finance Director
 - Ms. Brittney Lee applied for a scholarship to the annual conference and was awarded a scholarship as a first-time attendee.
2. Public Works June 2021, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer
 - Sidewalk plans and improvements continue throughout the City.
 - Oak Grove Roundabout construction continues and will open for traffic on August 3 at limited capacity.
 - Council commented on the beautiful landscaping around the City and 147 Park Street and gave kudos to Supervisor Troy Armstrong and his team for the exceptional work.
3. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report June 2021, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director
 - Work continues on tank maintenance and inspections

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Pickle Ball - Parks & Recreation, Sally Trapnell, North Georgia, and Lumpkin County Pickle Ball Ambassador
 - Ms. Trapnell presented a slide show and a YouTube video of the benefits of Pickle Ball, emphasizing the physical, social, and economic attributes of the activity.
 - Council discussed how a City/County partnership might support the request for public Pickle Ball Courts in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County.
2. 2021 Off Systems Safety, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager
 - Manager Hunsinger indicated no bidders for the Off System Safety project would begin a re-bid process for this project.
3. FY2022 City Manager's Recommended Budget, Bill Schmid, City Manager
 - City Manager Schmid presented the recommended Budget for FY2022 through PowerPoint, which includes a 4.6 % millage rate decrease and a 3% allowance for pay changes. The city continues with a 6th millage rate drop with this Budget.
 - Council indicated this Budget would go to a Public Hearing on August 2nd and before Council again at the Work Session on August 16th.
 - The City Manager and Council discussed hiring practices for the City Marshal's office; Fill the City Marshal position and then Deputy Marshal's. The Lumpkin County Sherriff's Office, GA State Patrol, and UNG provide police coverage during the interim.
 - Council commended the recommended budget changes that provide less transfer from the General Funds than in prior years. The Stormwater fee enables all parcels to pay the fee and reduce the overall tax burden.
 - The ARPA funds, which will go towards infrastructure, are not included in the FY2021 Budget.

4. Director Buchanan introduced Dudley Owens, Property Owner at 15 Arcadia St.
 - Mr. Owens requested consideration for a crosswalk addition at S Chestatee and Arcadia Street and a sidewalk toward S Park Street; City Manager Schmid recommended revisiting this request at a later meeting.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

- Community members opposed to the possibility of a hotel at the old Kindergarten property spoke out.
- Community members also voiced concern about light pollution on Crown Mountain at the Days Inn Hotel and the McDonald's restaurant areas.

Ms. Csukas, City Clerk, indicated she and City Attorney Parks would address the questions regarding a possible Post 5 vacancy and the upcoming November election.

City Manager Schmid discussed the upcoming DCA conference call this coming Friday.

City Attorney Comments- no comment

City Council Comments:

Councilmember Cordle- no comments

Councilmember Ariemma thanked Director Marlowe for her years of service.

Councilmember Gaddis thanked Director Marlowe for her years of service and welcomed Allison Martin to the team. Council Member Gaddis also expressed concern with sending the hotel proposal to the DDA Board at the last meeting as the Council does not have a shared vision of the kindergarten property.

Councilmember Ridley thanked Director Marlowe for her service to the City; not many people realize the extent of her dedication to her job. He also believes the Council discussion tonight is good as we have many opinions.

Councilmember Larson wishes Director Marlowe all the best to you.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Norton thanked Director Marlowe and welcomed her back for a visit.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton adjourned the work session at 6:22 pm