



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

November 15, 2021, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

PRESENT

Mayor Sam Norton

Councilmember Ron Larson

Councilmember Roman Gaddis

Councilmember Johnny Ariemma

Councilmember Joel Cordle

OPEN MEETING

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Committee—September 2021, Chris Worick, Committee Chairman

Presented by Mark Buchanan

Mayor Norton acknowledged the newly elected Mayor, JoAnne Taylor, and newly elected Councilmember Ryan Reagin and thanked them for being at the meetings.

Director Buchanan highlighted the DAR Memorial marker event, the Mt Hope Cleanup, and the proposal of a bench placement. Council and Director Buchanan discussed funding for the Cemetery. Council also highlighted the parking meters in an old photo of West Main Street, which Director Buchanan included in the report.

2. Main Street – September 2021, Ariel Alexander, Interim DDA Manager

Mayor Norton complimented the social media blasts that have been happening.

Ms. Alexander detailed the Master Plan retreat and annual assessment plan scheduled for January 11 and being held at the Chamber facilities at the Kelley building.

Mayor Norton asked about Wayfinding signs, and Ms. Alexander indicated they were accepting applications and renewing on time.

Council commented on the promotion of businesses, the addition of the business guide, how supportive they were, and other suggested additional posts to social media when a post is made to the website. Ms. Alexander detailed the funds for the Façade Grant and a digital Survey for employees as part of pre-retreat work, assistance with decorating the Square for Christmas, the Volunteer dinner tomorrow with heaters and hot chocolate. Council and Ms. Alexander also discussed the tree lighting of the Square and lighting requirements.

TOURISM: Sam McDuffie, Tourism Director

Director McDuffie stated that the Old-Fashioned Christmas Committee is handing out the lights and the Christmas Light Competition information. The Committee is preparing its budget for the upcoming year. The City Appointed position on the Tourism Board is opening as Tim Quigley is rolling off.

Working on a Snowbirds campaign targeting the Midwest heading to FL travel group and have a campaign kicking off 12/1. Director McDuffie and Council discussed the upcoming City Contract, the movie industry in North Georgia, various tournaments as revenue, increasing group sales, and looking for increasing midweek traffic. Director McDuffie is also working on the possibility of Achasta hosting the 680 AM the Fan's golf event in the fall.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. Marshal's Report October 2021, George Albert, City Police Chief

Chief Albert discussed items in his report that he has accomplished, as well as upcoming commitments. In discussing a name change from Dahlongega Marshal's Office to City of Dahlongega Police Department, Mayor Norton indicated that if the Council agreed, the name change could be an item added to the Special Called Meeting this afternoon. Council indicated agreement. Mayor Norton asked about following up on curb damage on the square. Chief Albert and Director Martin said they were following up on it.

2. Community Development – September 2021, Jameson Kinley, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Mayor Norton stepped out and passed the meeting to Mayor ProTempre Cordle.

Administrator Kinley added to the presented report that he was preparing to send out license renewals. Councilmember Larson thanked Administrator Kinley for the thorough report and details.

3. Community Development – October 2021, Jameson Kinley, Planning and Zoning Administrator

4. Finance and Administration Department – September & October 2021, Allison Martin, Finance Director

Director Martin announced a new option to communicate with Customers by mass emailing in time with the Thanksgiving Holiday changes. We have the opportunity with OneCall to send mass communication related to changes and outages. Council discussed the option of text message, and Director Martin indicated that we could move toward it in the future. Council discussed the opportunity for a survey to see what communication tool works for the community.

5. Public Works—September 2021, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer

Director Buchanan observed the Oak Grove Roundabout, which functioned well when school let out today. Changes are still coming. He also discussed an upcoming closure on Crown Mtn drive and a water main break the previous Sunday on Park Street. UNG is looking at adding an RFB Crosswalk at West Main. They will incur costs and maintenance. Council discussed upcoming changes with the school construction on Pinetree Way.

Mayor Norton returned and relinquished ProTempre from Councilmember Cordle. Council also discussed Pedestrian crosswalks and signs with a heavy rubber base, which Director Buchanan indicated he has new ones coming.

6. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report October 2021, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director, presented by Morgan Caldwell.

Mr. Caldwell indicated there were a few repairs, and they ordered more bottles and are in the process of some clean-up.

Councilmember Ariemma jumped forward to the item indicating the cost of three filter racks. These filters have a useful life of 10 years. Mayor Norton told Council their price was half what they were when we built the plant.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. 2022 Meeting Dates - City of Dahlonega (Updated), Mary Csukas, City Clerk
City Clerk Csukas presented a change in the Planning Commission Meeting to the first Tuesday, which allows the Community Development Department more time to review the information before bringing it to Council. The Planning Commission agreed to the change. The First Council meeting will be on Tuesday, January 4th, for the newly elected officials' swearing-in.
Administrator Kinley indicated that backing the meetings up in less than a week will allow additional time for preparation for Council. The applications will need still need to be completed 30 days before the meeting. This process will lighten the burden on staff.
2. Intergovernmental Service Agreement – Downtown Development Authority
Allison Martin, Finance Director
Director Martin indicated this Renewal document for Downtown Development Authority details the amount of compensation and payment. The City will continue to provide administrative and financial services.
3. Discussion: Golf Carts, Doug Parks, City Attorney
City Attorney Parks indicated the included report tries to put together an ordinance that risk management would accept. Many elements contained in the report are protective of the City's liability and also had the GMA model for this topic. Mayor Norton indicated that if we wanted to follow the model, we would need to identify areas of concern on the State Highway. Mayor Norton called for Council's input. Councilmember Ariemma indicated that the differences between Golf Carts and Low-Speed Vehicles are the vehicles' VIN numbers. Councilmember Gaddis was concerned with this being a safety issue. Councilmember Larson welcomed newly elected Councilmember Reagin and indicated he had mixed views on the topic. Councilmember Cordle suggested he did not think it was a burning issue but thought it might be an issue that could be a survey to the community for their opinion. Mayor Norton asked if Council wanted to see it as an Agenda item. Council decided this item would need additional discussion.
4. Discussion: Reducing the size of the Dahlonega City Council, Doug Parks, City Attorney
Mayor Norton reminded Council that the City operates under a Charter and stated there had been some discussion to shrink the size of the Council.
City Attorney Parks reviewed that the change would need to gain approval of our legislators, then be adopted by the general assembly. Council discussed taking the Council to 4 members and changing to districts. After a lengthy discussion Council decided they were not interested in districting the City and leaving the size of the Council at 6. Council agreed to seek appointees for the open seat for its remaining tenure of 2 years and decided to bring it before the new Mayor and Council in January.
5. Annual Asphalt Improvements, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager
Manager Hunsinger indicated that the bid that came in was extremely high, and he was exploring more options. He suggested a contract amendment with Raines. Manager Hunsinger told Council he would update them at the next session.

6. Residential Recycling, Mark Buchanan, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
Director Buchanan reminded Council that there had been a change in Recycling vendors, and the rate had increased substantially. The new rate is double. The new vendor missed a week, and we have two more weeks at our current rates and were waiting for a response from the vendor to extend through March. Council discussed the options to include having the City provide the service and the percentage of the community participating in recycling. The Council decided to let staff decide to continue or discontinue the program as the information came from the new vendor to ensure the budget was reasonable and continue communication about it to Council.
7. Approval to replace all three filter racks this fiscal year at the Water Plant
John Jarrard, Director of Water and Wastewater Treatment, presented by Morgan Caldwell. It is time to replace them, and the cost is going up, and the vendor has excess. It will save on costs instead of spreading the cost out over two years if done now. Council decided to bring the item to the November 15th Special Called meeting for a vote.
8. Oliver Drive Storm Water, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Project Manager
Manager Hunsinger stated the bid opening came in at \$191,275. The State is providing \$85,000, and we will be under budget on this project. Manager Hunsinger asked for the Council's approval of GradeCo. Council decided to move it to the November 15th Special Called meeting for a vote.
9. Water Main Extension SR 9, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Project Manager
Manager Hunsinger indicated the bids came in at \$705,000, and UNG will share the cost. He is preparing the proposal for UNG.
10. Contract Renewal - Jarrard Water Services, Bill Schmid, City Manager
City Manager Schmid referred to the enclosed document and recommended approval. Mayor Norton and Manager Schmid discussed the current tenure of Mr. Jarrard. Manager Schmid indicated the funds were available in the budget and asked for approval at the November 15th Special Called Meeting, and Council agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.