



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

January 16, 2024, 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 – Dahlonega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlonega, 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 Pro Tem Gaddis called the January 16, 2024, City Council Work Session to order at 4:00 P.M.

He welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for coming.

PRESENT

Mayor Pro Tem Roman Gaddis
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma
Councilmember Ryan Reagin
Councilmember Ross Shirley
Councilmember Lance Bagley
Councilmember Daniel Brown

ABSENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley to approve the agenda, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. Cemetery Committee—December 2023

Chris Worick, Chair, Dahlonega Cemetery Committee

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis stated that Chris Worick was not here to answer questions. He then stated how grateful they are for everything the Cemetery committee does.

2. Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority/Main Street – December 2023

Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Director

Downtown Development Director Alexander stated that there were no updates to the reports but could answer any questions.

Councilmember Shirley stated that the city had a fabulous tourism year this year and asked if any reports have been made regarding the things that need to be changed or improved.

Councilmember Ryan thanked Downtown Development Director Alexander for attending Leadership Lumpkin.

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

3. Tourism Committee Board Appointment

Allison Martin, City Manager

Communication

City Manager Martin stated that one seat is open, and Micoh Mihok wants to stay on the board.

4. Planning Commission Re-Appointment

Mary Csukas, City Clerk

Communication

Ms. Csukas, City Clerk, stated that there is one opening for the Planning Commission.

City Manager Martin stated that the Planning Commission will vote at the beginning of the year to nominate their chairman, but Chairman Conaway wants to stay on the commission.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

5. IGA Dahlonega Lumpkin SPLOST

Allison Martin, City Manager

Communication

City Manager Martin stated that this is an IGA between Dahlonega and Lumpkin County for a SPLOST continuation referendum, the orderly distribution of proceeds, the project lists, and other legal descriptions. Without an IGA, the sales tax can only be collected for five years, which amounts to a loss of ~\$5.5 million in the program. With an IGA, the sales tax can be collected for six years. Sales tax programs are essential in meeting local governments' capital needs without issuing a property tax levy, general obligation debt, or raising rates in enterprise funds. Staff recommends that this gets approved.

There was a discussion between Councilmember Ariemma and City Manager Martin about the details of the IGA.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis thanked the staff for working so hard on this SPLOST. He then explains several reasons the city must have an IGA to other council members and the audience.

Councilmember Bagley asked how fixed the city is on our submitted items.

City Manager Martin stated that once this item is voted on, it cannot change.

Council members, the mayor pro-tem, and staff had a discussion on rewording the projects.

6. Resolution 2024-01 Authorizing IGA Dahlonega Lumpkin SPLOST

Allison Martin, City Manager

Communication

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis commended the staff for all their hard work.

Councilmember Bagley asked if there was a chance for the council to relook at some of the items and be broader to ensure more flexibility in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis stated that it is too late to change. He then stated that if this item is not voted on tonight, it will miss the call on the election, and this will have to be pushed back to November. The goal is to have a continuation of sales tax with the primary election, and if we miss that call on the election, it becomes a risk of being unsuccessful. He believes that the council would be very short sighted to change the wording at this point in the process.

City Manager Martin stated that the bond council has already suggested rewording. She stated they had no other problems with the wording other than the last item. They wanted it to be more specific.

Councilmember Ariemma voiced his concern about this item.

OTHER ITEMS:

7. Lime Slurry Tank Purchase

Allison Martin, City Manager & John Jarrard, JWS

Infrastructure

City Manager Martin stated that the city council approved the lime slurry tank improvement project for the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the FY2024 budget. The project was bid and came in over budget due to the state requirement of a double-walled tank. Staff recommend purchasing the tank and waiting on approval of the federal government budget before proceeding with this lime slurry tank project in full. A 30-day price guarantee was given, and by purchasing directly, the city preserves the price, and the apparent low bidder is willing to give credit on their bid for the tank. The city is expected to receive \$350,000 in a direct Congressional allocation upon funding from the federal government in February 2024. Receipt of these funds would cover the difference in the budget versus the bid and allow this project to be completed without adversely impacting the enterprise fund's operating budget. The State has approved this project, and our insurance company requires that we complete this project for the safety of staff and the security of our chemical room. She stated that the staff recommends proceeding with the tank purchase to preserve the price.

Councilmember Bagley asked if the tank would still be purchased if the rates did not drop.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis deferred the comments until after the Special Called Meeting if that pleases the council.

The council agreed to defer the comments until after the Special Called Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis adjourned the January 18th, 2024, City Council Work Session at 4:23 P.M.