



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Meeting - Updated Minutes

February 05, 2024, 6:00 PM

Gary McCullough 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.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Taylor called the council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The mayor welcomed everyone to the council meeting and recognized Bobby Mayfield, commissioner for Lumpkin County.

PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor
Councilmember Roman Gaddis
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma
Councilmember Ryan Reagin
Councilmember Ross Shirley
Councilmember Lance Bagley
Councilmember Daniel Brown

PRAYER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Mayor Taylor asked Councilmember Daniel Brown to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Councilmember Johnny Ariemma to say the Prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Bagley, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - There are no items for the consent agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA SPECIFIC / THREE MINUTE LIMIT

Mayor Taylor welcomed anyone who wished to speak on topics on the approved agenda. Please come to the podium and sign in with your name and address.

Mr. Tom Gordineer discussed the sales tax projects listed in the newspaper concerning the City of Dahlonega.

Mayor Taylor expounded on the process for the SPLOST for the audiences.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the listed minutes on the agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis to approve the council meeting minutes a, b, c, d,
Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

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

- a. City Council Special Called Meeting Minutes - December 12, 2023
Mary Csukas, City Clerk
- b. City Council Meeting Minutes, January 2, 2024
Sarah Hunsinger, Assistant City Clerk
- c. City of Dahlonge Work Session Minutes - January 16, 2024
Sarah Hunsinger, Assistant City Clerk
- d. City Council Special Called Work Session Minutes, January 16, 2024
Sarah Hunsinger, Assistant City Clerk

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION:

1. Cemetery Oath of Office, JoAnne Taylor, Mayor, Communication

The mayor informed every one of the importance of the cemetery committee to the City of Dahlonge. Mayor Taylor stated that the Oath of Office for Mr. Harris to the cemetery committee will be moved to the next available council meeting.

2. Tourism Committee Board Appointment, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin presented Micok Mihok as the city appointee to the Tourism Board. The ceremony for the oath of office will be held with the Tourism Board.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve Micok Mihok's re-appointment to the Tourism Committee Board.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

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

3. Employee of the Year Award and Nominations, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin informed everyone what a special meeting this is, allowing the city and council to recognize the nominated employees of the year and the chosen employee of the Year: Nominees Jeff Saine, Jacke Grizzle, and Bill Duffy. Office Chris Weeks was selected as Employee of the Year, and Officer Weeks received his official Employee of the Year award through the Rotary Club.

City Manager Martin informed everyone that Jamie Rickett nominated Bill Duffy and Jeff Saine for their extraordinary work at the Water Treatment Plant after the unexpected passing of the Plant Manager, Buck McCallister. This team and our consultant, John Jarrard, worked together to keep the plant working to total capacity after the passing of Buck McCallister. These employees worked above and beyond, so the City created a Heart of the City award for each employee: Jamie Rickett, Bill Duffy, and Jeff Saine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – These are no announcements.

CITY REPORTS:

4. Tourism Report - 4th Quarter 2023, Sam McDuffie, Executive Director

Sam McDuffie outlined the highlights of his tourism report presented in the agenda packet for this meeting. The Visitors Center officially passed the official 200,000 mark with visitors in 2023; 211,244 people came through the center. We have continued growing our billboard advertising by adding four additional billboards in Georgia.

The Tourism Board had a strategic planning meeting in October 2023 and decided to build their organization on a four-pillar approach, as presented in the agenda packet.

The Four Pillars are: 1. Marketing our destination, 2. Knowing our guests, 3. Welcoming our guests, and 4. Community Outreach

The Councilmembers followed with questions that showed the Board will focus on Group Sales with hotels, Lodging availability, Sports tournaments, Marketing to destinations, Film and TV shows, Monitoring the actual numbers of guests visiting Lumpkin County with GO Fencing, Social Media, and the positive impact tourism on Property taxes.

The Tourism Board will present a State of the Tourism Event this May.

5. Financial Report - December 2024, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Allison Martin outlined the highlights of the 2023 ending three-month Financial Report in the agenda packet.

Councilmembers discussed Local Option Sales Tax, motel tax, and sales tax. It was requested that columns representing the budget versus the requested amount be added to the report.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to accept the Financial Report.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Ariemma.

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

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

6. Resolution 2023-06 Sign Moratorium Amendment One, Doug Parks, City Attorney

Mayor Taylor stated that in the past, the Council had passed a moratorium on sign permits while the zoning ordinance was being reviewed. City Attorney Parks recommends that we amend the moratorium to a more specific item. Mayor Taylor turned the subject matter over to City Attorney Parks.

City Attorney Parks stated that this goal is to limit the applications to the things that need to be amended. We are now looking at continuing the moratorium on wall signs painted on the exterior of a building or the use of alternative paint such as vinyl or similar materials. Currently, our ordinance does not limit this type of signage element.

Councilmembers discussed aspects of this amendment to the moratorium on the current sign ordinance.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve Resolution 2023-06 Sign Moratorium Amendment One.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis to approve Resolution 2023-06 Amendment One to the temporary moratorium on the acceptance and processing of sign permit applications, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:

There are no contracts or agreements.

OTHER ITEMS:

7. Executive Session - Real Estate, JoAnne Taylor - Mayor

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to convene the executive session.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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

Mayor Taylor informed the Public that we had exited the Executive Session and had decided on something in the executive session that we must now vote on in the public. Mayor Taylor called for a motion regarding a real estate transaction.

Councilmember Gaddis motioned that the city purchase the Conner Gardens from the Conner Estate for \$200,000 so we may maintain the park, seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

The council discussed the history and future of Conner Gardens as a green space in the City.

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

Voting Nay: Councilmember Shirley opposed the length of time associated with restrictions on the name Conner Memorial Gardens.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Mayor Taylor requested that the comments be handled before the council convenes for the executive session.

Ms. Csukas had no comments.

City Manager Martin states that the City will host Lumpkin Leadership students at City Hall.

City Attorney Parks had no comments

Councilmember Ariemma will be out of town for the next council meeting.

Councilmember Bagley congratulated the Lumpkin High School men's wrestling team for their outstanding achievements.

Councilmember Brown congratulated the recipients of the awards presented tonight to the City Staff.

Councilmember Reagin had no comments.

Councilmember Gaddis congratulated the recipients of the awards presented tonight to the City Staff and discussed the recent Cities United Summit in Atlanta, GA, attended by the City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and City Clerk for training opportunities.

Councilmember Shirley congratulated the recipients of the awards presented tonight to the City Staff.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the council meeting.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin, Seconded by Councilmember Gaddis.

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