



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

May 20, 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 Taylor called the May 20, 2024, City Council Work Session to order at 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Taylor thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda as written.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley to approve the agenda as written, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

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

BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. Cemetery Department Report - April 2024

Quataunda Armstrong, Dahlonega Cemetery Committee

Public Works Director Buchanan stated they had a big turnout for a cleanup day.

Mayor Taylor complimented the Cemetery Committee on all of their hard work and stated her appreciation for all they do.

Councilmember Reagin also stated that the Cemetery Committee is doing a great job.

Councilmember Bagley asked if the Cemetery Committee would be able to get the flags out this weekend.

2. Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority/Main Street – April 2024

Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Director

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT: <https://dahlonega.gov/category/department-reports/>

3. City of Dahlonega Police Department - April 2024.

George Albert, Chief of Police.

Mayor Taylor asked if there were any questions from the council regarding the department reports.

Councilmember Ariemma asked a question about the number of traffic stops and citations in March. He also asked about the number that represents the extra patrol.

Councilmember Bagley stated that the extra patrol has had positive feedback from the business owners.

Mayor Taylor complimented all of the departments. She stated that there is a lot of positive feedback from the community. She thanked everyone for everything they have done and continue to do for the community.

4. Community Development Report - April 2024
Allison Martin, City Manager
5. Finance and Administration Department – April 2024
Kimberly Stafford, Finance Manager
6. Public Works—April 2024
Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer
7. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report April 2024
John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION : (Vote at Council Meeting)

PRESENTATION

8. Drug Free Lumpkin 365 Introduction Presentation
Dr. Mike Carpenter

Mayor Taylor introduced Dr. Mike Carpenter to the Council, noting that his presentation would be of particular interest to Councilmembers and staff within the county.

Dr. Mike Carpenter then delivered his "Drug-Free Lumpkin 365" presentation to the Council.

After the presentation, Mayor Taylor, Councilmembers, and staff all thanked Dr. Mike Carpenter for coming and spreading great information throughout the community.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

AGREEMENTS & CONTRACTS:

9. Axon Camera Quote
Allison Martin, City Manager
Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor turned this item over to City Manager Martin.

City Manager Martin explained that when the Marshal's Office, now the Police Department, was reinstated in Dahlonoga, a decision was made to use Axon as the supplier for body cameras and equipment, which now includes car-mounted cameras. Leasing the cameras is more cost-effective than purchasing them outright, as all updates, storage, and maintenance are included. At the end of the lease, the equipment is upgraded, preventing the government from dealing with outdated equipment. This model is used by many agencies and saves over \$10,000 during the lease's duration. With the addition of cameras, which were included in the budget, the lease amount now exceeds the manager's approval threshold and requires council approval. The funds are allocated in the operating budget. As with all leases, if the budget does not contain the necessary funds, there is no obligation to continue. It is the recommendation of the staff to approve this lease.

Councilmember Shirley asked if this included the new officer that just came on board.

Councilmember Ariemma stated he was shocked about how expensive the units are. He stated that he noticed only three of everything but thought there were four officers. He then asked how the information gets saved on the cameras. He then asked if there were other units looked at.

Councilmember Reagin stated that he thinks body cams are a great idea. He then asked if the five year agreement was normal. He voiced his concern about technology moving so quickly it is concerning to him. He also asked if it goes into a cloud and then the city change services would the city lose the data.

Councilmember Brown stated that with these kinds of cameras it would be evident if the cameras had been tampered with.

Councilmember Reagin asked if Councilmember Brown was concerned about the five year contract.

Councilmember Brown stated that he usually only sees three year contracts but since this company has been around for a while and updating their systems he doesn't see an issue with the five year contract.

Mayor Taylor informed Councilmembers that the city is already using this company but instead of owning it they are leasing it. She stated that the only things that are changing is how the city is paying for it and where the information is stored.

Councilmember Ariemma asked if this company is testing the system enough to know the validity of the cameras.

Councilmember Shirley suggested that this item be moved to the consent agenda.

OTHER ITEMS:

10. Living Waters Winery & Vineyard, Inc. – Tasting Room License

Doug Parks, Attorney & Mary Csukas, City Clerk

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor turned this item over to City Attorney Parks and City Clerk Csukas.

City Attorney Parks stated that the Living Waters Winery & Vineyard Tasting Room License was complete. City Clerk Csukas also stated that the application was complete.

Mayor Taylor suggested this item go onto the consent agenda. Councilmembers agreed.

11. Project 2024-006 City of Dahlonega Plaza Improvements

Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager

Strategic Priority - Infrastructure

Mayor Taylor turned this item over to Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger.

Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger stated that the bid opening was on April 23rd, and the lowest bid was \$270,453.70. The Capital Projects Team estimated a budgetary need of \$295,060, so he was pleased that it was under the budget. The city has tourism product development funds sufficient to cover this needed project with no other funding. He stated that this includes removing tile and replacing with brick pavers because the current tile texture is slick and could cause falls, replacing sewer service due to frequent blockages in current system, replacing handicap ramp per plan, replacing thermoplastic striping, adding electrical outlets to decrease the chance of pedestrians tripping and falling over drop cords at Christmas and other events, and adding trench drain and stormwater to alleviate water entering the Welcome Center at the bathroom entrance.

Councilmember Shirley asked if the drains sloped a certain way and asked if this was planning on being fixed.

Councilmember Bagley asked what was the timeframe for this project.

Mayor Taylor stated that this area has been a lot of work for the City and has caused a lot of backup for the most used places on the square.

Councilmember Ariemma asked if the county should be helping the City with this project.

Mayor Taylor asked councilmembers if they would like this on the consent agenda.

Councilmembers agreed to put this on the consent agenda.

12. Potential Columbarium Donation - Mt. Hope Cemetery

Allison Martin, City Manager

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor turned this item over to City Manager Martin.

City Manager Martin reported that a citizen approached both her and City Engineer Buchanan regarding the council's interest in placing a columbarium at Mt. Hope Cemetery. The citizen offered to donate a columbarium unit, covering purchase, delivery, and setup costs up to \$100,000, excluding site preparation. The proposed location is on the lower access road nearest to UNG's property. A map will be provided at the meeting to show the proposed location, and staff will discuss the pros and cons of this site. The city would handle installation costs and assume responsibility for future maintenance of the structure.

City Engineer Buchanan stated that he was concerned about the location but stated that the columbarium will be long and thin. He stated that the columbarium should not affect that access. He thinks it will start on the northern side of the property line.

Councilmember Ariemma asked about the engraving on the spots meant. He also asked if the columbarium was around 20% sold. He also asked if this is something that is needed in the cemetery.

Councilmember Gaddis asked what the estimated site prep cost would be.

Councilmember Reagin asked if there was a design that they could look at before approving in the future.

Mayor Taylor suggested making a mock up of what they are planning to do. She also states that they will most likely take any action at the next meeting.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments

City Clerk Csukas stated that Assistant City Clerk Hunsinger will be out of the office for two weeks.

City Manager Comments

City Manager Martin stated that DDA Director Alexander had prepared the letter of intent for the Georgia Initiative Community Housing Program. She said that it will be going out this week. She also stated that staff had had multiple conversations with the residents on Timberlane about a proposed repair to that street. She stated that some paving, ditch work, and shoulder repair would be required to deal with the stormwater that is coming off that street. She stated that a packet is being made and will be sent out to contractors soon.

City Attorney Comments

City Attorney Parks had no comments.

City Council Comments

Councilmember Gaddis had no comments.

Councilmember Ariemma stated that he would be celebrating his 38th year anniversary.

Councilmember Reagin had no comments.

Councilmember Shirley thanked City Manager Martin for doing all that for Timberlane. He also stated that the Aquatic Center had a soft opening on the weekend and said they are having their grand opening this upcoming weekend. He also stated that on Monday, there will be a Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the courthouse.

Councilmember Bagley had no comments.

Councilmember Brown had no comments.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Taylor had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the City Council Work Session at 6:51 P.M.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis to adjourn, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

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

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlonaga will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlonaga commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!
