



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

October 21, 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 Protem Gaddis called the meeting to order at 4:10 P.M.

PRESENT

Councilmember 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 Protem Gaddis 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 Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. 2024 - 3rd Quarter Marketing Report
Sam McDuffie, Executive Director

Executive Director Sam McDuffie presented the 2024 3rd Quarter Marketing Report highlights to the Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmembers.

Councilmember Shirley noted an 18% decline in website traffic and asked whether this was a reason for concern regarding revenue. He also asked which age groups contributed the most to spending and whether the city was doing enough to attract visitors.

Councilmember Ariemma discussed quality versus quantity in tourism data and suggested getting updated statistics from the state.

Councilmember Bagley requested an update on the Netflix filming activities in the area.

Councilmember Reagin asked how neighboring towns were performing in comparison to Dahlonega.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis thanked Mr. McDuffie for everything him and the staff do.

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

2. Community Development - September 2024

Allison Martin, City Manager

Councilmember Ariemma stated that he was surprised at the number of residential permits and asked if it would be possible to categorize the different types of permits for clarification in the future.

3. Finance and Administration Department – September 2024

Kimberly Stafford, Finance Manager

4. Public Works—September 2024

Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer

5. City of Dahlonega Police Department - September 2024.

George Albert, Chief of Police.

6. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report September 2024

John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director

Councilmember Shirley stated that there was much talk about fluoride being used in the communities' water and asked Water/Wastewater Treatment Director Jarrard what he thought about all of this.

Councilmember Ariemma asked if there is a filter that can be used for people who are concerned.

City Manager Martin reminded everyone that the cemetery committees' clean-up at Mount Hope is coming up soon.

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

PRESENTATION

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

AGREEMENTS & CONTRACTS:

7. Agreement for Tourism Development Services – 2025

Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin presented an agreement for Tourism Development Services for 2025. She explained that the City had contracted with the newly established Convention

and Visitor's Bureau earlier this year to provide tourism development services. Based on the success of the current partnership, city staff recommend renewing the contract with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Additionally, they have proposed a change from a fixed monthly dollar amount to a percentage of proceeds, less the city's statutorily allowed 3% administration fee. The distribution of these proceeds is governed by legal statute, and this use is both authorized and included in the City's operating budget. City staff recommend approving the contract as presented.

Mayor Pro Tem asked a question about the 3%.

Councilmembers agreed to move this item to the consent agenda.

8. Contract Renewal – Jarrard Water Services (JWS)

Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin presented the contract renewal exceeding \$50,000 for Jarrard Water Services, owned by John Jarrard. Since January 1, 2020, Jarrard Water Services has provided part-time consulting to the City's water and wastewater departments. The original one-year contract was extended in 2022 at a rate of \$4,458 per month, totaling \$53,496 annually. This contract, included in the FY25 budget with no additional financial impact, proposes a 3% increase, bringing the monthly rate to \$4,730, or \$56,760 annually. City staff recommended approval of the renewal, citing the critical need for John's continued expertise as the City updates the water/sewer master plan, navigates federal and state mandates, and manages staff coverage during employee absences. His contributions are deemed invaluable for ongoing operations.

Councilmember Ariemma asked about the on-site training opportunities that John provides.

Mayor Pro Tem expressed appreciation to John, acknowledging and thanking him for his continuous assistance and past efforts.

Councilmembers agreed to move this item to the consent agenda.

9. Water/Sewer Master Plan Update – Proposal Discussion

Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin presented the Water/Sewer Master Plan Update Proposal. The city's current plan is 18 years old, and updates are required every five years to meet state and regional mandates. After evaluating qualified firms, the selection committee chose Hazen and Sawyer for their experience and quality of work. Hazen proposed a two-phase approach, but staff recommends spreading the project over three years to stay within budget and manage time effectively while still completing the plan before the next permitting cycles. City Manager Martin recommended refining the financial proposal and entering into a multi-year agreement with Hazen.

Councilmember Shirley asked about the four vendors, asking whether the state dictates the scope of the project or if the city has the ability to define it independently. He also asked whether the existing plan would be used, how frequently the plan is utilized, and what the budget and funding source would be.

Councilmember Bagley asked for the cost of phase one and whether the vendors provided examples of other cities they've worked with.

Councilmember Brown questioned whether this would involve an ongoing annual fee.

OTHER ITEMS:

10. 2025 Meeting Dates

Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk

Assistant City Clerk Waters told the Council that staff has reviewed the bylaws for each committee and commission, considering holidays and court dates. She mentioned that if the Council has any changes they would like to suggest, they should let staff know, and those changes can be made.

Councilmember Ariemma suggested moving two dates on the Downtown Development Authority meetings list.

Councilmembers agreed to move this item to the consent agenda.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments

Assistant City Clerk Waters had no comments.

City Manager Comments

City Manager Martin had no comments.

City Attorney Comments

City Attorney Parks had no comments.

City Council Comments

Councilmember Shirley stated that Gold Rush was a fantastic event, but parking was quite challenging. Suggested adding signs to direct the public to available parking for the Christmas season.

Councilmember Reagin stated that Gold Rush was a success overall, with a particularly busy Sunday.

Councilmember Brown had no comments.

Councilmember Bagley stated that Gold Rush was excellent, and shared the news that Wall That Heels will be coming to UNG.

Councilmember Ariemma announced that Publix will be opening on October 30th.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis stated that Gold Rush was great and asked about any updates regarding Halloween festivities.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Gaddis called the meeting to adjourn at 4:56 P.M.

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlonega 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, Dahlonega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!
