

City of Sparta  
Regular Council Meeting  
December 8, 2020 @ 5:00 pm

Council members in attendance were James Clark, David Ingram, Tom Roberts and Sandra Sherrod. Mayor Allen Haywood, City Attorney John Hitchcock, and City Clerk Virginia Webb were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem James Clark, with Prayer, The Pledge and Roll Call following.

**Amend Agenda**

A motion was made by James Clark to amend the agenda adding Dip Pollatty under Old Business pertaining to the Grant to repair the old police building on Broad Street. Tom Roberts seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

**Adopt Agenda**

A motion was made by James Clark to adopt the agenda. David Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

**Adopt Minutes**

A motion was made by James Clark to adopt the minutes, for November 10, meeting. David Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

**Outdoor Burn Ordinance**

The second reading of the Outdoor Burning Ordinance was read by Attorney Hitchcock, highlighting the rules, exceptions, and enforcement of the Ordinance.

James Clark made a motion to adopt the outdoor burn ordinance. David Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

## **Renewal of Face Mask Ordinance**

James Clark motioned to renew Face Mask Ordinance for 30 days. Tom Roberts seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

## **Proclamation Honoring Rev. Jimmy Horton**

Rev. Jimmy Horton was honored pointing out many of his accomplishments. Rev. Horton was born and raised in Sparta, Hancock County, Ga., and has civically served Hancock and the surrounding counties for the past 30 years. He is a pastor dedicated to serving God while helping those in need. Rev. Horton spoke briefly about plans to help improve downtown Sparta.

## **Clerk's Report**

1. QS1-Progress is being made with conversion of all modules. The Property Tax bills have gone out and the last day to pay without penalty is January 31, 2020. There were some issues but we needed to make sure the bills were correct before mailing them out. The General Ledger and Accounts Payable modules should be completed in a few weeks.
2. The direct deposit info has been entered for each employee desiring to have their paycheck directly deposited into the bank.
3. The clerk's bathroom remodeling has been completed.
4. City employee's have been approved to cash in up to 80 hours of Comp Time or Annual Leave prior to the end of FY 2020B (December 31, 2020).
5. All City of Sparta employees will be given an IGA gift certificate to be redeemed for a Ham to show our appreciation to them for Christmas.

## **Mayor's Report**

1. Advance Disposal was purchased by Waste Management Company and will change ownership immediately. The Mayor & Council members, as well as the citizens are not pleased with the service that has been provided by this company and is looking to end contract at the end of the term.
2. A Proclamation honoring the Hancock Central High School Boys' Basketball Team was presented on November 17, 2020. They won the state championship in March of 2020. A parade had been planned downtown, but was canceled due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. The team

was honored at a Ring Ceremony and the Proclamation was presented by Mayor Haywood. Also in attendance were Councilmen Clark & Ingram.

3. Public Service Commission completed an in-depth 3-day inspection on our Natural Gas department, which is done every 5 years. Some deficiencies found were lack of cut-off valves, rusting around the pipes that were exposed, lack of maintenance on gas meters and most importantly additional certified personnel is needed.
4. A joint contractual agreement with Hancock County & the City of Sparta was signed stating that we would work together in regards to the Regional Commission.
5. We are working on our FY2021 Budget and hope to have the budget hearings completed by mid-February and will set the Mill Rate in August. Our prior fiscal year began May 1 and ended April 30 of the following year. We decided to change our fiscal year budget to match the calendar year, beginning with FY2021 (January 1 to December 31, 2021).
6. We will look at our Rate Schedule for Services and cut-in fees to make sure our fees are in line with what the services cost the City to perform them.
7. We have some personnel matters that will be discussed in executive session.
8. Ryan Brinson, CPA, and Manager of Governmental Accounts, from the Deemer Dana CPA firm attended the meeting so that the council members could get acquainted with him & ask questions if needed. He has worked in this capacity for several years, and states that the office has a different atmosphere and "feel". He has been a great help to the treasurer and city clerk, responding quickly when called upon. He will work with Wright & Wright, the auditors, to complete the 8-month budget that ended December 31, 2020.
9. The City Treasurer should be transferring 1/6 of bond payment into an account each month to pay that loan in July and December.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Polatty stated that we have 2 outstanding grants-1 for the historic resource survey & 1 grant for damage caused by Hurricane Irma for \$25,000 for

roof on old police station. A newly announced grant for damage caused by Hurricane Michael has minimum request of \$100,000 and a maximum of \$350,000 and is for governmental authorities only. It is a reimbursement grant and requires no match. Mr. Polatty's request to apply for new grant was approved. He has also purchased signs that will be placed on the property to identify properties that will come before the commission to be approved and another to show properties that have been issued a COA.

### **New Business**

None

### **Citizens' Input**

Ms. Willimatine Tolbert complemented Mr. Polatty for all of his hard work with the Historic Society. She also thanked him for the Historic Preservation Society signs. She still wishes to see more participation at the council meetings so that citizens will know about the progress being made.

### **Executive Session**

James Clark motioned to go to executive session. David Ingram seconded the motion.

### **Back to Regular Session**

James Clark made a motion to return back to regular meeting. David Ingram seconded the motion.

### **Adjournment**

James Clark made a motion to adjourn. Tom Roberts seconded the motion.  
The meeting was adjourned.

