

City of Sparta

Regular Meeting April 13, 2021

5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

Elected Officials present Mayor Allen Haywood, Councilman David Ingram, Councilman Tom Roberts and Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod. Mayor Pro Tem James Clark was absent.

City Clerk Virginia Webb and City Attorney John Hitchcock were present.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Haywood, at 5:00 pm, in the absence of Mayor Pro Tem Clark. The Lord's Prayer, Moment of Silence, and Pledge of Allegiance followed.

It was decided by the council members, that in the absence of Mayor Pro Tem Clark, Councilman Roberts would preside over the meeting.

Adopt Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda by Councilman Ingram and seconded by Councilwoman Sherrod. Vote was unanimous.

Adopt Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the March 9, 2021 minutes and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the March 15, 2021 minutes and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Renewal of Face Mask Ordinance

The new guidelines for Face Mask Ordinance have changed from the previously recommended 6 feet to 42 inches, by the State of Georgia. Police may issue citations, but no arrest can be made, if the ordinance is not followed.

Clerks Report

1. LMIG Grant funds were approved and received on April 12, 2021. These funds will be used for to patch, pave and/or stripe city streets.

2. The mandatory clerks training June 6-8, Sunday thru Tuesday, will be held in Athens, GA, and will be attended by City Clerk, Virginia Webb.
3. Some of the files with our Utility Billing department were deleted, causing a delay in the April 14th “go live date” with QS1. We have since resolved the issues, once this billing cycle is complete, we will go live with our UB software. This will allow acceptance of credit/debit card payments in-house and online. Our progress with QS1-the new software system- has been stalled by the antiquated systems that we have had to work with. Some systems had not been updated since 1993. We have already updated Property Tax, Payroll, Occupational Tax License and Beer & Wine License modules.
4. Georgia Department of Community Affairs has announced that they will be accepting applications for the housing Choice Voucher Program from April 22-26. Formerly known as Section 8, this program has been closed since May 2018. It will also assist low-income families, the elderly, and disabled individuals to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Visit www.dca.ga.gov or call 404-679-4940 for more information.
5. Georgia Dream Homeownership Program, will present a Lunch & Learn Webinar, April 14, 2021 @ 12:30 pm. I will attend virtually and share the information on the program’s offerings and latest updates at our next meeting.

Mayors Report

1. A departmental meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 @ 4:00 pm, to discuss deficiencies at the Waste Water Plant. Council members, Utilities Supervisor, City Clerk, Treasurer and Waste Water Plant Manager were invited to meeting.
2. Our new contract for waste disposal will start July 1, 2021, with Ryland Environmental of Dublin, GA. A 90-day notice to end the contract, with Waste Management, formerly Advanced Disposal, was given in February 2021.
3. We are making progress on Sewer/Water repairs and we are making plans to get the dilapidated systems repaired/replaced.
4. Water Line at Kennel has been completed.

5. Storm drain at the corner of Hamilton & Spring Streets caved in, on or about April 3. It is an old terra cotta pipe and the entire pipe from Ingrams funeral Home will be replaced, then paved.
6. Tony Poss, Waste Water Plant Supervisor will be retiring on April 14, 2021. He was employed by the City of Sparta, since July 3, 1990-over 30 years. He will be recognized for his service. Amanda Akins, Class 2 Licensed operator, has been hired to serve as Waste Water Plant Supervisor. Amanda has given us a report of the deficiencies at the plant.

Old Business

None

New Business

Text My Gov Contract

Text My Gov is a service that will allow the City to notify its' customers of emergency situations, deadlines, closures, inclement weather, etc. It will be an alternate communication to inform the citizens of important information. A motion was made by Councilman Roberts and seconded by Councilman Ingram, to accept the 3 year contract that will cost \$2,700 (includes \$800 first year setup) and \$1,900 per year afterwards. This includes all equipment. The vote was unanimous.

Sparta Beautification Day

A motion was made by Councilman Ingram to declare Friday, May 7, 2021, Clean-Up Day for the City of Sparta. The street department will remove old/unwanted furniture, cars, and appliances for one day only. Councilwoman Sherrod seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Appoint Committee for Joint City-County Comprehensive Plan

Councilman Ingram made a motion to appoint Beth Webster, Makesha Foster, and Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod to serve on the joint committee with Hancock County to ensure that Hancock County/City of Sparta will be Broadband ready. Councilman Roberts seconded the motion. Councilwoman Sherrod abstained from voting.

Discuss Business License Fees

Attorney Hitchcock was asked to have schedule of fees prepared for next work session. No action taken.

Discuss Spending of American Rescue Plan Act Funding

America Rescue Plan Act Funding-The guidelines will be released at a later date, as to what projects that these funds can be used for. We are a non-entitlement city (less than 50,000 in population) and will not receive funds directly from the Federal government. However, funds will be released to State of Georgia, sixty days after March 10, 2021, and one half of the calculated amount will be forwarded to the city 30 days after being received. The remainder of funds will be forwarded one year after initial transfer. Funds must be spent by December 31, 2024.

Discuss Procedures for Permits, COAs, Maintenance Ordinance

There will be a meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021 to discuss a unified plan for Building Permits, COAs and the Property Maintenance Ordinance. Timmy Griffin-Waste Water Superintendent, Stephanie Hannah-Building Permit Clerk, Teresa Andrews-Hancock County Planning & Zoning, John Hitchcock-City Attorney, Historic Preservation Committee Members, City Clerk and Council Members were all invited to attend the meeting.

Resolution to Appoint Voting Delegate for MGAG Board Election

Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia will hold its Annual Election Committee meeting. It will be held on May 7, 2021 at 10:30 am, to fill the terms of three board members that will be expiring. Mayor Haywood is the current delegate for the City of Sparta, and Timmy Griffin is the alternate. Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the resolution with the chosen delegates as stated above and was seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous. Mayor Haywood will attend the meeting virtually and represent Sparta in the Election.

Historical Preservation Meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, on Thursday, May 13, 2021 in City Hall Council Chambers

City Hall will close Wednesday, April 21 at 11 am. & Re-open at 8 am Thursday, April 22.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30 pm Monday, May 3, 2021, in City Hall Council Chambers

Regular Meeting will be held on May 11, 2021 at 5:00 pm in City Hall Council Chambers

Citizens Input

Marion Warren- County- Stated that he has met with other cities and they are aware of the amounts and they have received it. He does not know why we are saying that we don't know how much funding that we will receive or why we are saying that we haven't received it.

Makesha Brown-City- Thought that the "Text My Gov" idea was a great idea.

Paula Dixon-County-Questioned the posting of work sessions procedure. Attorney Hitchcock replied that it is not an official meeting and does not have to be posted. Only regular/called meetings have to be posted 24 hours before meeting. However, notification of said meeting had been posted. Also asked when Text My Gov would be up & running. We have trainings scheduled, should be approximately 60 days.

Charles Jackson-County-Has issues with non-licensed contractors being allowed to complete work in the City/County. Councilman Roberts stated that if a permit is not required for a particular job then a license is not required.

Della Smith-County- Stated that the City's web page looks great. There are a few updates that need to be made but overall she was very impressed.

Shelia Waller-County- Stated that Jailhouse Road needs to be repaired. Mayor Haywood replied that we are looking at some discretionary funds with the County in hopes of doing some paving. We were waiting for the weather to get better.

Mandel-City-asked about the fines for the face mask. The fine is \$50.

Executive Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go to executive session and Councilman Ingram seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Several legal/personnel issues were discussed.

Regular Session

Councilman motioned to go back to regular session and Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Councilman Ingram motioned to hire James Harper Jr and Councilwoman Sherrod seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Adjournment

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn meeting. Councilman Ingram seconded. The vote was unanimous.