

City of Sparta
Regular Meeting May 11, 2021
5:00 PM
City Council Chambers

Elected Officials present Mayor Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem James Clark, Councilman David Ingram, Councilman Tom Roberts and Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod.

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem Clark, at 5:00 pm. The Lord's Prayer, Moment of Silence, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call followed.

Adoption of Agenda

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to adopt the agenda and Councilmen Roberts seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Adoption of the Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the minutes from April 13, 2021 meeting was and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous. A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the minutes from May 3, 2021, Called Meeting and was seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

Presentation of the 2020 Preservation Commission Award

An award was given to Connie & Josie Williams by the Historic Preservation Commission for the remarkable preservation of their property known as the Rozier/Williams' home located at 271 Boland Street.

Renewal of Face Mask/Covering Ordinance

The face mask ordinance has expired and will not be renewed as the cases decline in Hancock County and around the State of Georgia. To date we have had 907 cases and 65 deaths in the county. There have been 4,298 vaccines given and 3,181 of those were Hancock Countians. No Action taken!

Clerks Report

- The Georgia Dream Lunch & Learn webinar held on April 14, 2021, announced that it will offer first time home buyers \$7,500-\$15,000 in down payment assistance for the purchase of a home if qualifications are met. Contact www.dca.ga.gov or call 706-679-4940, for more information.
- The property tax collections for 2020 taxes have been great. To date we have collected \$199,425, leaving a balance of \$63,000 delinquent for tax year 2020. We have begun to send out letters to property owners that are delinquent and have since noticed an increase in collections of approximately 20% above last month.
- We are working on new procedures for building permits, COA's, and Property Maintenance Ordinances to simplify the process and ensure that all rules are followed.
- The U.S. Department of Treasury has announced the launch of the Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds or American Rescue Plan Act. We will be allowed flexible spending up to the level of revenue loss for the City of Sparta. Funds can be used to support public health expenditures, address negative economic impacts caused by Covid 19, aid communities hardest hit by the pandemic, provide premium pay for essential workers, and invest in Water, Sewer, and Broadband infrastructure.
- We are making progress with the Utility Billing module of the QS1 software. We are currently working in the new system and have discovered some issues but have been assured that the programmers are working on them.

Mayors Report

1. Environmental Protection Division (Natural Resources Department) has been contacted to ensure the City of Sparta, that we can allow an easement to be built on the Southside of Fairmont Road where the landfill is located. Charles & Mary Jackson are planning to build housing units on the property adjoining landfill.
2. We have surplus inventory and are in the process of planning a sale. It will be a closed bid sale and bids will be submitted to the City Clerk. Other details of the sale will be announced at a later date. The items on the list include several vehicles and may include other items.

3. Text My Gov is a notification service that will be available in early June. It will be posted on the website for everyone interested to sign up. This service will announce all important information about road closures, water advisories, meetings, etc. pertaining to the City of Sparta.
4. EMC Broadband has requested a lease to locate a Fiberhut on two city properties, 1 near the Filter Plant and the other Waste Water Facility. We are asking \$1 for the use of the property and free hookup to the two buildings. They are requesting to lease a 9x16 plot on each property.
5. The Highway 15 truck route is behind schedule due to Covid 19 pandemic, according to Department of Transportation. Bidding is scheduled to begin June 20, 2022 and possibly ready for traffic by 2024.
6. GMA has a program for new mayors that offer mentoring. Mayor Haywood has been paired with Roxanne Whittaker, mayor of Harlem, Ga for mentoring. They will be meeting soon and we look forwarding to the opportunities that this meeting will afford the City of Sparta.
7. On May 8, 2021, Greater Interfaith Coalition, volunteered their resources to help educate the residents of the City of Sparta/Hancock County. This included Covid 19 vaccine information & participation encouragement, and information to help voters navigate Georgia's new voter identification laws. They were prepared to serve 300 people. 10 people did receive vaccines.

Old Business

Business License Fees

In looking to update our Business License Fee schedule, we found that all of the surrounding cities charge administrative fees each year per business. In addition to that fee, some charge per employee, others charge per category or business. We are in the process of deciding which rate the City of Sparta will use. Attorney Hitchcock stated that a hearing will be required to change the fees.

Spending of American Rescue Act Funding

We are still waiting for the guideline details to show what monies are to be spent on. However, it has been established that the funds can to be used to update Water, Waste Water and Broadband systems, we will be using the majority of the funds to update these systems that are in need of updating. The city will be

responsible for all funds spent and are required to do quarterly reporting to the Treasury Department. The total for small cities that will be distributed has been determined, but no specific amount for each city has been announced. The treasury indicates that details will be released as they are available.

Procedures for COAs, Maintenance Ordinance, etc.

A map has been placed for viewing showing boundaries for the Historic District. All property located inside the Historic District will be required to have a COA issued, before any permits will be issued.

New Business

Sparta/Hancock Chamber of Commerce

Sparta/Hancock Chamber of Commerce has announced the new membership renewal rates. The membership fees are as follows: Single Businesses- \$50
Industry-\$200 Gold- \$250

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts and seconded by Councilman Ingram to join the Sparta/Hancock Chamber of Commerce and pay the \$200 fee as an industry. Vote was unanimous.

GIRMA Pollution Liability Quote Action

Discussions about policy included the amount for the basic additional coverage will be \$1280. This is policy will not cover spills or herbicides. The more extensive coverage cost \$1900 and would cover several other accidents as well as the above mentioned. Attorney Hitchcock will look in-depth at the policy already in effect to ensure that this addition to the City's Liability Policy won't duplicate any coverages already in place. No Action taken.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting will be held in City Council Chambers on Thursday, May 13, 2021 @ 5:30 pm

City Hall will be closed May 31, 2021 to observe Memorial Day

Mayor & Council work session will be held Monday, June 7, 2021 @ 4:30 pm

Mayor & Council Regular meeting will be held Tuesday, June 8, 2021 @ 5:00 pm

Citizens' Input

None

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to go into executive session and Councilman Roberts seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Executive Session

Several personnel issues were discussed during this session.

Back to Regular Session

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to go back to regular session and Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Councilman Ingram motioned to hire Courtney Johnson as a Street Laborer and Councilwoman Sherrod seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to hire Mitchell Perritt as Maintenance Mechanic and Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. Councilman Roberts did not vote.

Adjournment

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilwoman Sherrod seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

