

City of Sparta  
Regular Meeting September 14, 2021  
5:00 PM  
City Council Chambers

Elected Officials present were Mayor Allen Haywood, Mayor Pro Tem James Clark, Council Members David Ingram, Tom Roberts, and Sandra's Sherrod. Councilperson Sherrod arrived at 5:08 P.M. during the Clerk's Report.

City Clerk, Virginia Webb and City Attorney, John Hitchcock were present. This meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem James Clark at 5:00 P.M., followed by the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Amend Agenda**

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to amend the agenda by adding the adoption of the July 13, 2021 minutes and to remove item #13, the second Reading/Adoption of Insurance Company Regulation Ordinance and #15 A Birthday Proclamation for Barbara McGhee.

**Adopt Agenda**

The motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the agenda as amended and seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

**Adopt Minutes**

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to adopt the minutes for the July 13, 2021, council meeting. Councilman Roberts seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the minutes for the August 10, 2021, council meeting and seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

**Clerk's Report**

1. All current employees of the City of Sparta were rewarded on August 18,2021 with "Premium Pay" bonuses from the ARPA fund.

2. Preparation for the 2021 Election has begun. We have installed extra outlets for the voting equipment. Internet lines have been placed for computers and cameras. One of the new state requirements will be to have camera surveillance for the voting machines .
3. All requirements for the City of Sparta property tax bills to be processed have been met. We have had all the hearings and adopted the millage rate. All copies of the millage rate certification have been distributed to each entity. Also, because we are rolling back millage rate, the Chairman of the Board of Tax Assessors has been given millage rate rollback form for his signature. Our goal is to get the tax bills to property owners by October 29, 2021, and set the due date for December 31, 2021 for taxes to be paid without penalty.
4. In preparation for the open enrollment period for benefits, we are continuing to explore options with insurance companies. Retirement plans are being explored as well. We plan to choose the best option to offer to the city's employees.

### **Mayor's Report**

1. REACH- sublease at the Police Station address ends September 202, but have asked to extend their stay until October 2021.
2. \*Due to the natural gas prices trending upwards, a meeting with Will Knowles from Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia will be on 9/15/21 to explain the increase.
3. Council has approved the millage rate decrease for the 2021 fiscal year.
4. An order for a 14 ft dual axle trailer from Sinclair Heavy Duty has been placed to transport the mowers from place to place, to minimize the wear and tear.
5. A podcast was held featuring Sistie Hudson and Griffith Pollatty promoting tourism and sharing the history of Sparta and Hancock County.
6. The positivity rate for Covid-19 is currently at 24% for Hancock County. It has slowly increased since the beginning of school and the start of Fall.
7. The contrast drawing for the pedestrian park was approved. Jerry Hood with EMI, the city's engineering firm, will begin accepting quotes to complete the park. Quotes will include a retaining wall and must have 2% drop for drainage purposes..

8. An adjuster with GIRMA, which is the company that insures the properties for the City of Sparta, has completed an inspection of all properties. During the inspection, it was found that the space rented for the Sparta Police department had been listed as a property owned by the City. As a result of this finding, the premium will be lowered.

### **Adoption of Municipal Election Contract/ Intergovernmental Agreement with County Government/BOER**

The City of Sparta and Hancock County Board of Elections has entered into an agreement to assist in the November 2, 2021 Election.

### **Second Reading/ Adoption of Occupation Tax Ordinance**

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the new Occupation Tax Ordinance. Councilman David Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Second Reading/Adoption of Municipal Court Date Ordinance**

Municipal Court Judge Lingold has requested that the monthly court date be changed from the 4th Wednesday to 4th Monday, so as not to conflict with other dates where he is required to preside. Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to change municipal court to the 4th Monday at 1 p.m. effective November 2021. Councilman Roberts seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Second Reading/Adoption of Financial Institution Regulation Ordinance**

ProTem Clark made a motion to approve the Financial Institution Regulation Ordinance #260 that specifies that the tax on institutions should be a minimum of \$1000 or 2.5% maximum of the gross receipts. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Old Business**

#### **A. Scheduled Street Paving & Repairs/Infrastructure**

##### **Paving Update**

- i. Patching on Willis Street was completed today.
- ii. Pumping Station Road holes were repaired.
- iii. Parkway Drive repairs were completed today.

### **Infrastructure**

- i.Submission for two pumps at every station has been made.
- ii.The EPD did an inspection at the Wastewater Plant and was astonished at all the accomplishments.

## **B. Municipal Election Dates for Advanced Voting & Absentee Ballot**

### **Submission; State Law Voting Requirements**

i.Advance/Early voting will be October 12-29, 2021. Polls will open at 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday voting will be October 23, 2021, 9 a.m-4 p.m.

ii.The first day of absentee ballot can be sent out will be October 12.

### **C.Election Superintendent's Report of Candidates' Eligibility**

i.Makesha Brown- Foster has been disqualified due to residency. She could not provide proof of having resided in the city for twelve months. The charter states that one must have lived within the city for 12 months prior to the election.

ii.Prince Rav Yisrael is disqualified due to residency. He did not provide proof of residency within the city for 12 months prior to the election.

### **D.Surplus Vehicles' Sale**

i.The city will hold a surplus sale on several vehicles. We will accept sealed bids beginning September 23 until October 4 at 4p.m. The bids will be opened during the October 5 council meeting. Description of vehicles will be advertised. Vehicles included in the sale will include: 1999 Ford Truck, 2001 Ford Truck, 1986 Chervolet C30 Dump Truck, 2000 Ford Truck and the 1953 Fire Truck. Council member Roberts motioned to approve surplus sale and Councilmember Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **New Business**

### **A. Mayor, Council & Staff's Progress Report**

i.A progress report has been compiled to inform the citizens of Sparta on the progress that we have made in the last 20 months. Copies will be made available to the public as requested. The progress report will also be posted on the cities' website at [Cityofsparta.org](http://Cityofsparta.org).

### **B. October Mayor & Council Meeting Date & Change**

i.Mayor & Council Regular Meeting will be held on October 5 instead of October 12, due to Advance Voting. The change will be posted on the city door and the website.

## **Executive Session**

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to enter executive session.

Motion was seconded by councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

**Regular Session**

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to return to regular session and

Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

No item discussed in the Executive Session was presented for a vote.

**Adjourn Meeting**

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Councilman Roberts. The vote was unanimous.