

## City of Sparta

Regular Council Meeting November 9, 2021

5:00 pm

### City Council Chambers

Elected Officials present were Mayor Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem James Clark, Council Members David Ingram, Tom Roberts, and Sandra Sherrod.

Councilperson Sherrod arrived to meeting at 5:45 pm.

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

This meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem Clark, at 5:00 pm, followed by a moment of silence, the Lord's Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Adopt Agenda**

The motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adopt the agenda 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 October 5, 2021 meeting. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Clerk's Report**

All eligible employees have been given the opportunity to sell up to 80 hours of their accumulated Comp Time or Annual Time, during the BuyBack for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Funds will be disbursed this week. The retirement plan for employees will be finalized and sent to administrator this week. The target date is January 1, 2022. The ARPA Supplement request for first responders is in the application process. A rezoning hearing has been scheduled for Jerum Hargrove on December 6, 2021 in the City Hall Council Chambers at 4:30 pm. Open Enrollment for employee benefits were rescheduled due the 34% increase in premium for United Healthcare. We are waiting for a bid from Anthem/ Blue Cross quote. Turkeys will be given to all City of Sparta employees as a token of our appreciation for their dedication and hard work. A WRDA grant application will be submitted seeking funding to complete needed repairs at the Water Filter & Waste Water

Plants. If selected, a study will be done by the Army Corps of Engineers. Preliminary work on the City of Sparta 2022 Budget will begin in the upcoming weeks as we prepare for the new year.

### **Mayor's Report**

Georgia Department of Transportation has been contacted about placing 2 speed breakers on Hamilton Street. Overview has been given \$30,000, by the City of Sparta, to assist eligible citizens with past due utility bills. Eligibility will be determined according to the Federal guidelines. We were working with Johnnie Smith Paving Company to complete needed repairs in the East End Community. The estimated cost is \$10,000. This will patch all the streets in this community. We have been notified by Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia that natural gas prices will increase across the United States this winter. We will be informed monthly as to how much the costs will be as they rise and fall. The city has ordered 500 gas meters and have received 240. The cost for the new electronic devices were about \$20,000. The new meters will reduce gas leaks and meters being misread. We have received our audit from Wright & Wright Auditing firm. They have expressed that they are greatly pleased with the changes that have been made, as this change has improved their ability to retrieve information timely. There was only 1 finding. The clerk has set up new procedures to remedy that finding. The Pedestrian Park is waiting for the survey to be completed. Ryland Environmental started the new contract in July 2021, for waste collection. We are auditing the list of cans and will be billing for the accounts that may not be being currently billed for. We know that some accounts may have cans and are not currently being charged for them. Shane Harper, Water Filter Plant Manager, reports that due to the continuous location of leaks and repairs, we have decreased the water loss by 15%, in the City of Sparta. This amounts to saving the City approximately 200,00 per day. Georgia Department of Labor plans to start the four lane road from Warthen to Sparta for Truck By-pass in 2026. There will be a meeting at the Warthen Community Center on November 18, 2021, from 5 pm to 7 pm.

### **Old Business**

- A. Submit 2022 Budget Preferences by November 19, 2021 to Mayor
- B. Comprehensive Plan

Council Roberts motioned to approve the Resolution for the Adoption of the DCA Approved Hancock County-City of Sparta joint Comprehensive 2021-2026 plan. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **New Business**

Councilman Roberts motioned to approve the National League of Cities membership. Councilman Ingram seconded the motioned. The vote was unanimous.

Mayor & Council work session Monday, December 6, 2021 @ 4:30 pm

Mayor & Council regular meeting Tuesday, December 14, 2021 @ 5:00 pm

City Hall closed November 25 & 26 in observance of Thanksgiving Holidays

Historic Preservation Meeting Thursday, November 11, 2021 in City Hall

### **Citizens' Input**

Zachary Reynolds states that when he originally invested in property here, he was not aware that he would be bound by the Historic Preservation Commission rules. He asks that the law be dissolved or property owners only required to participate on a voluntary bases. It was explained that it was put in place to help the City with blight and for everyone's safety. The Historic Preservation Commission noted that we will continue work with property owners and have not turned down any applications.

Martha Harris wants update on the Dog Kennel. She will be emailed an update on kennel.

Paula Dixon inquired about additional stipulations added to funds given to Overview for citizens of Sparta. There are none added by City. Must meet Federal guidelines as required by other Overview funds.

Marion Warren inquired about ARPA money and were they chosen. Also, inquired about the remaining funds. It was explained that the Water & Waste Water Plants both are in dire need of many repairs and upgrades. Remaining funds will be directed to both plants.

### **Executive Session**

Councilman Roberts motioned to enter executive session and Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Regular Session**

Councilman Roberts made a motion to return to regular session. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

A motion to rehire Antonio Tucker to City of Sparta Police Department as a Police Officer was made by Councilman Roberts and seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

A motion to hire Latresa Warren as a Clerk/ floater was made by Mayor ProTem Clark and seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

A motion to hire Jason Oliver as our Information Technology contractor was made by Councilman Ingram and seconded by Councilman Roberts. The vote was unanimous.

### **Adjourn Meeting**

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