

City of Sparta
Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 9, 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.

Staff present City Clerk Virginia Webb. City Attorney John Hitchcock was absent.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem James Clark at 5PM followed by the Lord's Prayer and The Pledge of Alligence.

Amend Agenda

A motion was made by Councilman Clark to amend agenda to approve Della Smith to fill the unexpired term of Dennis O'Shields on the Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was made by Councilman Roberts and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Adopt Agenda

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to adopt the Agenda and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Adopt Minutes

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to adopt the minutes from the January 12, 2021 meeting and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Appointment to Historic Preservation Commission

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to approve the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission to appoint Della Smith to fill the unexpired 2 year term of Dennis O'Shields. It was seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Renew Face Mask Ordinance

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem Clark to renew the face mask ordinance and seconded by Councilman Roberts. Vote was unanimous.

Ryland Environmental Proposal

The Mayor gave us the details on why the city should change solid waste disposal providers. He said it is not only cost effective overall, but will hopefully provide better customer service. We were given a copy of the Cost Proposal from Ryland indicating that this will be a fixed rate contract with no annual rate increase. Councilman Clark made a motion to contract with Ryland Environmental for our solid waste disposal company, beginning July 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ingram. The vote was unanimous.

Appoint Appeals Board for Property Maintenance Ordinance

Mayor ProTem Clark motioned to appoint Randolph Clayton, Councilman David Ingram, and Charles Jackson to serve on appeals board for property maintenance ordinance. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Mayor Haywood mentioned that we reached out to David Hargrove, without success, to also serve on the board.

Nepotism Policy

It was motioned by Councilman Roberts to table discussion until next work session/special work session to discuss this policy. It was seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Ordinance for Mayor & Council Pay Raise

It was motioned by Mayor ProTem Clark to table discussion until next work session/special work session to discuss this policy. It was seconded by Councilman Roberts. Vote was unanimous.

Adrian Hill- Williamson Tire Incident

It was motioned by Councilman Roberts to reimburse Adrian Hill-Williamson, \$95, for damage caused to her tire while traveling on Adams Street. It was seconded by Councilman Ingram. Attached to her request was a copy of the police report.

\$100 Fee for Background Check for New Businesses

A motion was made by Mayor ProTem James Clark to table discussion until more information is gathered on fee for background checks. Councilman Ingram seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Clerk's Report

1. W2's & 1099's have been printed and distributed.
2. Preparation for the 2021 Budget Planning Process has begun and we are well on the way to completing it. Treasurer Debbie Butts, Mayor Haywood & I have spent approximately 4 ½ days working to get it completed. Timmy Griffin, Superintendent of the Water/Gas/Street Department was also involved in the budgeting process. All departments were given a worksheet to complete and return to advise us of equipment that need repairing or replacing.
3. We have received a copy of the FY202 financial audit from Wright & Wright. We have a copy here available for viewing.
4. Municipal Court will resume this month. It was cancelled last month due to the rising numbers of Covid 19 cases.
5. Property tax collections have been really good to this point for the current tax year, we have collected \$180,000 of property taxes due for 2020. Total amount of taxes billed were \$265,000. About 72 % collected.
6. A life insurance claim for Taiwan Battle was submitted to Principal Life. This is an employee benefit paid for by the City of Sparta for all full-time employees. On January 1, 2020, this benefit was put in place for all employees-\$20,000 life benefit & \$15,000 AD&D.
7. An application for grant monies was submitted to GDOT/LMIG to help with paving/repairing streets. Streets suggested were Hamilton & Adams.

Mayor's Report

1. The Street Dept has submitted a list of tasks that will be performed each day. Monday-Cleaning streets downtown, Tuesday-Trimming Trees, Wednesday- Blowing off/cleaning drains, Thursday- Chipping & Friday-performing maintenance on vehicles.

2. Our GPS tracking devices have arrived and are ready to be installed for the City Vehicles.
3. A check in the amount of \$5,000 to the Hancock Public Library will be issued this week for our support for FY2021.
4. For the first time in 20 years, The City of Sparta finances are in the black and we are working on repairing things & fixing leaks, gas issues, infrastructure problems, fixing up downtown area, and trying to recover from the years of mismanagement of funds.
5. The State of Georgia Election Board has notified the Secretary of State in regards to election fraud during the 2017 Election. Details will be shared in executive session on the findings.

New Business-None

Old Business-None

Historic Preservation Meeting will be Thursday, February 11, 2021 @ 5:30 PM

Mayor & Council Work Session will be Monday, March 1, 2021 @ 4:30 PM

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting will be March 9, 2021 @ 5:00 PM

City Hall will be closed February 15, 2021 to observe Presidents Day.

Citizens' Input

Nathan Dardy appeared for the second time asking the City to advise him on how to get the Salad Shop building up to code. Attorney Hitchcock stated that the contractor, Charles Jackson and Utilities Superintendent, Timmy Griffin, will need to meet to decide on the next step because of the complexity of the situation. The storage building that was brought into the City will have to be brought up to code before we can approve it to open as a business.

Charles Jackson-reported water leak near his residence.

Kelly Jergens -requested date of opening of the Dog Kennel.

Paula Dixon -inquired about fixing the potholes in the City. Had questions about background ground check for business license.

Mandel-asked about stray dogs in neighborhood & what to do about them. She was referred to Martha Harris in the meantime until Kennel is opened.

Martha Harris – Concerned about fixing the Kennel will do more than save the dogs & cats but will also prevent people from littering with their animals and will also encourage people to get out and walk.

Naji- Abnormal fluctuations in utilities at 419 Hamilton St

Cathy Ransom- Hancock County Library -thank you for the support. The library really does support community and has free tutoring, job search and wifi services available. Brought books to share

Wilmatine Tolbert-has attended meetings for over 10 years & was happy to see someone else show up in concern. Mentioned that the group in place now is working on getting things done and improving Sparta.

Dip Pollaty -thanks Council Mayor & Attorney for time and efforts for a job well done to get the City back on track. Dip was in turn thanked for his job & the work that he has done with the Historical Preservation Commission.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Clark to enter into executive session. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

Regular Session

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Clark to return to regular session and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.

No action was taken regarding executive session discussions.

Adjourn Meeting

A motion was made by Councilman Roberts to adjourn meeting and seconded by Councilman Ingram. Vote was unanimous.