

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, July 11, 2023

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes— June 6, 2023 “Called” Meeting & June 13, 2023 Regular Meeting
7. Departmental Reports
8. Clerk’s Report
9. Mayor’s Report
10. New Business
11. Old Business
 - A. City Attorney’s Report on Ronnie Evans’ Requested Compensation
12. Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting 5:30pm Thursday, July 13, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
14. Mayor & Council Work Session for August Will Be Held 4:30pm Monday, July 31, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
15. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, August 8, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
16. Citizens’ Input (Please limit Questions/Comments to 3 Minutes)
17. Executive Session: Legal and Personnel Business
18. Adjournment

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Meeting
5PM Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Elected Officials present were Mayor Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem Sandra Sherrod, Council Members Brandon Nolley, Tom Roberts, and Rav Zuridan Yisrael.

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem Sherrod followed by a moment of silence, The Lord's Prayer, and The Pledge of Allegiance.

Adopt Agenda

Councilman Yisrael motioned to adopt the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Adoption of Minutes – June 6, 2023 “Called” Meeting & June 13, 2023 Regular Meeting

Councilman Yisrael motioned to table June 6, 2023 minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Yisrael motioned to table June 13, 2023 minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Departmental Reports – Filter, Police & Wastewater

(See Pages 6-11)

Clerk's Report

1. Michael Kimball, from CSRA Regional Commission, and Tina Hutcheson, from the Department of Community Affairs, will meet with Mayor Haywood, City Clerk Virginia Webb, and Amada Akins, wastewater superintendent, to discuss improvements for the downtown area. There will be follow-up meetings to include the property owners for business ideas. The first meeting will be Wednesday, July 19, 2023 at 10 a.m. in city council chambers.
2. The Secretary of State's Office of Elections has scheduled eight training sessions ranging from election preparation, tabulation, and certification. Qualifying for the upcoming election will be from Monday, August 21, 2023 to Friday, August 25, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day, at city council chambers. The qualifying fee for council members will be \$54 and for Mayor \$360. Qualifying packets will be available Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at city hall. Packets cannot be accepted until qualifying begins on Monday, August 21, 2023.
3. Jodi Hunt, the city's account manager at CivicPlus/Municode, has been sent the requested information for the republication of ordinances.

4. The Health & Wellness Fair will be held on Saturday, July 29, 2023 at 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Hancock County Youth Opportunity Center. For more information or questions call (706) 444-6616.
5. The “Get Rid of Your Stress Event” will be held on Saturday, July 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the playground of the Hancock County Parks & Recreation Center. The event is free and refreshments will be served. Meditation, yoga, release techniques, and more will be included. For more info contact Trevor Lawson.

Mayor’s Report

1. LMIG will fund the city \$25,859.44 for the fiscal year of 2024.
2. EMI had applied for a lead service line replacement request through GEFA. The preliminary application has been made.
3. Fire House Subs Public Safety Foundation has awarded the city on behalf of the Sparta-Hancock Fire Department the requested Amkus cutter and other rescue equipment including \$550 in freight valued at \$36,801.
4. The city’s GEFA principal forgiveness loan application for \$6.8 million has been pre-approved.
5. The animal shelter has housed 9 dogs – three have found homes and four remain at the shelter.
6. Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) has funded the Overview Program for the fiscal year \$319,530 and an extra money, \$130,134, for the job that the city has done in the communities.
7. REACH will give the city \$591.91 to help with the expenses at the animal shelter.
8. The city paid \$7,898 to the Environmental Protection Division annually, serving 3,454 people drinking water including those who are on the county lines but utilizing the city’s water.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Old Business

A. City Attorney’s Report on Ronnie Evans’ Requested Compensation

City Attorney John Hitchcock discussed the legal issues surrounding former City Police Chief Ronnie Evans' retirement. He stated to fulfill former Chief Ronnie Evans' request for compensation, the Council must have voted to do so, and the law must support, require, or permit the request.

Attorney Hitchcock explained that he first became aware of the issue around 2007/2008, when Chief Evans was considering retiring, and Chief Evens contacted the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefits Fund (POABF), which is the entity in charge of the police officer's retirement. He was ineligible at the time and requested that the city address the problem. The city had no information about the problem.

Former Councilwoman Betty Hill proposed that the city attorney, Attorney John Hitchcock, and the former city clerk, Virginia Brown, meet to determine what former Chief Walter Garrett earned upon retirement, because Chief Evans wanted the same as his predecessor upon retirement. City Clerk Virginia Brown and Attorney Hitchcock discovered an article in the Sparta Ishmaelite that stated that Chief Garrett had been given a gun and a patrol car.

Chief Evans stated that he was not ineligible for benefits since the city had stopped paying into the POABF on his behalf.

Attorney Hitchcock and City Clerk Virginia Brown searched the matter and discovered no evidence of who had paid the POABF in the city's records.

Former Secretary Treasurer Robert Carter of the POABF, whom Attorney Hitchcock contacted, stated that he could not provide any information even with an Open Records request; a subpoena would be required. According to the POABF, the officer can pay out of pocket, or the city can pay as a salary decrease or a benefit. The POABF was unable to inform Attorney Hitchcock, who was personally paying into fund of behalf of Chief Evans, but could provide payment dates and amounts.

At city hall, no cancelled checks were discovered.

Chief Evans, represented by Attorney Clifton Boone at the time, filed a lawsuit against the city over his retirement in 2009. The lawsuit gave the city the authority to request a subpoena for the POABF's records, after which the city would have access to Chief Evans' actual records. A motion for summary judgment was filed by the city because the records were never received.

In January 1997, the POABF mailed Chief Evans a certified letter that stated that he had failed to make a payment and would no longer be a member if the payment was not made. The city argued in the summary judgment motion that Chief Evans was dropped from the fund for nonpayment of dues on Friday, February 7, 1997, based on information found. The POABF sent all mail directly to the officers, not the city. Chief Evans had "constructive knowledge" that he was no longer a member of the fund on Friday, February 7, 1997 by certified mail.

Wednesday, January 5, 2011, Chief Evans filled out a refund request and mailed it the POABF requesting 95% of his contribution, which he received; proving he had "actual knowledge" that he was no longer a member of the fund.

The statute of limitations for contract law is four years.

The city's motion for summary judgment was because the action was barred by the statute of limitations for failing to be filed on time. That motion was denied because Chief Evans' attorney voluntarily dismissed the lawsuit without prejudice. In early 2012, a

federal lawsuit was filed in Macon against the city for civil rights violations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments, as well as for the payment of retirement benefits. The city hired Jones, Cork, & Miller, a Macon firm, and filed a motion of summary judgment, which stated the statute of limitations barred the action. Judge Royal heard and considered the motion and the motion was granted, dismissing the lawsuit. At that time the city was not liable to pay Chief Evans anything as far as retirement.

From a legal standpoint, the city cannot pay anything it does not legally owe. Article 3 section 6 paragraph 6 of the Constitution of the State of Georgia states that “the General Assembly shall not grant or authorize extra compensation to any public officer, agent, or contractor after the service has been rendered or the contract entered into.” The city is not legally obligated to pay Chief Evans’ request for compensation because under the law it would be considered a gift.

The law does not support Ronnie Evans’ request for compensation.

Citizen’s Input

Elizabeth Havier, a resident of the county, asked Mayor Haywood how was he informed of which city residents receive funds from Overview. She wants more handicap parking and accessibility in the city, and for Sparta to move forward as a community. She thanked the city for fixing Spring Street.

Mayor Haywood responded that with each check from Overview there is an attached page showing the name of each person, account number, and the amount paid for every check.

Dip Polatty, a city resident, asked if the city would have another pick up day for appliances.

Mayor Haywood stated that he would meet with Timmy Griffin to talk about the issue.

Morgan McClendon, from the REACH program, invited the community to the Youth Opportunity Center at 6:30 p.m. The Georgia Hi-Low Trail and the Path Foundation will be reviewing the trail that will be coming through Hancock County.

Paula Dixon, a county resident, requested that Council keep the meetings open to the public to attend.

Mayor Haywood stated that the second Tuesday is the council meeting.

Charles Jackson, a resident of the city, stated that ever since the dog pound came into his neighborhood and he has dog feces in his yard. He would like the city to focus on the future and for schoolboard, the county, and the city to work together to make progress. He stated that every contractor should have a business license.

Lael Yisrael, a resident of the city, asked if gambling machines were allowed to pay cash prizes.

City Attorney John Hitchcock stated that it is state regulated so the city or council has no input.

Executive Session: Legal and Personnel Business

Councilman Yisrael motioned to go into Executive Session; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Back To Regular Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go back to regular session; Councilman Yisrael seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Yisrael motioned to contract Renette Worthen for Election Supervisor; Councilman Roberts seconded. Mayor ProTem Sherrod voted "yes." Councilman Nolley voted "yes." No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Adjournment

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Water Production

For June, the treatment plant withdrew 31.6 million gallons of water from the lake, and sent 25.7 million gallons to the City's distribution system. (The difference in those numbers indicates water used for various purposes in the treatment process.)

Other Areas

Facility

The treatment plant experienced a storm related power outage on 6/25. Our generator kicked on and kept systems online until power was restored the following day.

A total of 5 large meter heads were shipped to McCrometer (in Hemet, CA) for calibration and certification. We hope to have these returned to us in the coming weeks.

To maintain our supply of working equipment, 2 new peristaltic chemical feed pumps and an assortment of parts were ordered from Tyson Services for approximately \$1900. This also included an instructional session on pump maintenance attended by Shane Harper, Jimmie Watkins, and BJ Mackler.

Dale Lowery, calibration technician with DWL Instrumentation, made his quarterly service visit to the treatment plant and calibrated/certified a total of 11 pieces of equipment. This included replacing the keypad on a lab pH meter and replacing a failed colorimeter.

Personnel

TerMarion Hunl has passed his Class 3 Water Operator Exam. His state issued Operator License is currently being processed. Once that has been issued, all water treatment plant operators will be licensed by the State of Georgia, bringing the department into compliance with state law. All currently licensed operators have completed the required training courses and have been issued renewed licenses valid through June 2025.

Compliance

The City's annual water loss audit has been completed, certified, and accepted by the state. The City's annual water quality report has been completed, and links to view it were sent with customer utility bills.



CITY OF SPARTA

POLICE

365 SPRING STREET - SPARTA, GEORGIA - 31087
OFFICE: 706-444-5777 / FAX: 706-444-0827

JUNE 2023

SPARTA POLICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

288 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

80 – TOTAL WRITTEN TRAFFIC CITATIONS

- 27 – SPEEDING
- 3 – SUSPENDED REGISTRATION
- 2 – SUSPENDED LICENSE
- 2 – AFFRAY (FIGHTIN IN A PUBLIC PLACE)
- 46 – OTHER TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

5 – ARREST

- 2 – AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
- 1 – DUI
- 1 – DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
- 1 – DRIVING WHILE UNLICENSE

PREVIOUS MONTH STATS: MAY 2023

191 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

35 – TOTAL WRITTEN CITATIONS

2 – ARREST

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- YOUTH SUMMIT SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2023 ... SPARTA-HANCOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY...

11AM-1PM ... FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING 9TH TO 12TH GRADES IN FALL 2023

SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED: CASE LAWS, TRAFFIC LAWS, MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

GUEST SPEAKERS: Attorney John Hitchcock (City of Sparta Attorney & Solicitor) & Lashauna R. Jackson (Hancock County Superior Court Clerk)

- STUFF-A-PATROL CAR ... Help us pack a patrol car with back to school supplies ... We will donate all the supplies to the BOE to help the kids be prepared for school ... We will collect supplies until July 24 ...

June 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

Sampling Results (June 7, 2023):

Parameter	Influent (Before Screen)	Effluent (After Outfall)	Monthly Limit	Overall Removal Efficiency
Rainfall	8.28 Inches		Report	-
Flow MGD	0.385	0.487	0.800 MGD	-
BOD	258.5	26.8	50 mg/L	89.6%
TSS	51	29	90 mg/L	43.1%

Notable Work:

- During the quarterly sampling at the Wastewater plant, several issues were identified that are believed to be caused by a combination of alternating high and low prison flow, as well as the startup of Aerator #4. In June, the prison experienced several sewage spills into the nearby creek, resulting in low flow conditions at the Wastewater facility. To address the low flow, bypass pumps were brought in, which quickly increased the flow and pushed the newly loosened sludge from Aerator #4 throughout the facility. This organic overload led to higher-than-normal levels of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), and Conductivity. Additionally, it resulted in low levels of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and pH levels that were outside the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) limits. GA EPD notified about the pH violation. Furthermore, during the same month, the prison accidentally dumped chemicals on the facility, which further impacted its operation. These events have had a negative impact on the overall performance of the facility and its compliance with regulatory limits. Further actions, including remediation efforts and communication with relevant authorities, will be necessary to address the issues and ensure proper operation of the wastewater treatment plant.
- To address the high organic load and other issues at the Wastewater plant, staff applied Sludge Rx to both Aeration Ponds. The aim was to decrease the organic load flowing through the ponds by increasing microorganism activity. In addition, staff made adjustments to the aerators, implementing an alternating on-off pattern. This was done to create an anaerobic zone within the ponds, which would promote increased organic demand by microorganisms and help raise pH levels. By taking these proactive steps, the staff is working to improve the plant's performance, address the identified issues, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. Ongoing monitoring and adjustments will be key to achieving long-term stability and maintaining the plant's operational efficiency after an upset.
- Staff have submitted a request for three new aerators (Aerator #3, #7, and #11) to replace the missing aerators at the Wastewater plant. Aerator #7 experienced a failure in June, prompting the need for a replacement. The purchase of these new aerators is part of an ongoing effort to upgrade the equipment at the plant, as the original aerators were approximately 30 years old. Additionally, two of the original 5-horsepower aerators are currently undergoing evaluation at WACO to determine if they can be repaired. This evaluation will help determine if these aerators can be brought back into service, providing potential cost savings. It is important to note that there is currently a backorder for the new aerators, and their expected arrival is not until after August 2023 at the earliest.
- Staff is currently collaborating with the Georgia Rural Water Association (GRWA) to develop an Asset Management Plan for the wastewater plant. This initiative is in response to new rules set by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), which are anticipated to come into effect in the coming years. Working closely with GRWA, staff will assess the current condition of the plant's assets, identify any areas that require improvement or investment, and develop strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability and performance of the facility. The Asset Management Plan will provide a roadmap for ongoing asset maintenance, replacement, and upgrade, ultimately supporting the plant's compliance with EPD regulations and enhancing its overall operational effectiveness.

June 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

- The control panel LCD for the influent bar screen controls experienced a failure, displaying a "Fatal Error" message. Staff promptly notified the Utilities Director about the issue. After assessing the situation, it was determined that the electrical components of the control panel were beyond repair. A replacement control panel was ordered to restore the functionality of the influent bar screen controls. Once the replacement panel arrives and is installed, normal operation of the influent bar screen controls will resume.
- A water leak was identified between the Pump House and the back gate of the facility. However, due to ongoing repairs on the backhoe, which is necessary for fixing the water leak, the repair work has been postponed until July.
- As part of his Water Distribution training, Mitchell Ray Perritt assisted the Utilities Director in repairing a water leak at the shut-off valve located in front of the wastewater plant.
- Staff at the wastewater plant encountered an issue with Aerator 6, which led to the temporary removal of the aerator from service. The problem arose when the cord holding the aerator malfunctioned and became entangled within the propeller. To address this issue, staff took the necessary steps to repair Aerator 6 and ensure its proper functioning.
- Groundwell Downgradient 6 (GWD-6) had high nitrate levels during June. This resulted in a permit violation and EPD was notified. Staff believe the cause of this to be the prison as their sewage line runs beside GWD-6 and all other wells had extremely low levels of nitrates including those between the spray fields and GWD-6.

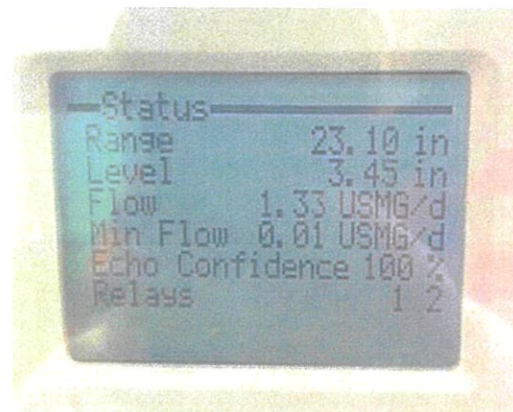
Other Notable Items:

- Amanda Martin Akins passed the highest classification exam for wastewater, Class I and received her license from the state. The current pass rate for the Georgia Class I Wastewater exam is 31% as of 2022. This certification requires at least 3 years' experience in the field and 2 years' experience in direct responsible charge to receive.
- Michael Heath Graham completed the Wastewater Class III class in late June and is preparing to take the exam in the future. He was granted \$500 from the AWWA to cover the class expenses and an additional \$1,500 from the WEF to cover his travel costs. It is also important to note that the exam will change as of July 2023 and the current exam has a 30.6% pass rate.
- Mitchell Ray Perritt submitted his application for the Water Distribution License with the state and received it in late June. Currently, he is involved in water line repair projects at the Wastewater facility. This work serves as an opportunity for him to gain practical experience and contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the facility's infrastructure until he is able to train fully with the Utilities Director.
- The Department of Public Health (DPH) is organizing their first health fair, and they have sought assistance from the City of Sparta due to the success of their first event. Staff members from the City have provided information and guidance to DPH on how to set up, run, and attract vendors for the health fair. They have also remained available to answer any questions or concerns that DPH may have throughout the planning process. The DPH Health Fair will be held on Saturday, July 29, 2023.
- Staff members provided assistance to the Public Works department in preparing for the Landfill Inspection on June 16th. Their support involved various tasks, including assisting with paperwork and ensuring the overall cleanliness and maintenance of the landfill grounds.

June 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

- Staff met with the Regional Commission to discuss potential grants for various projects. Each department identified major items that required funding, and these items were then discussed with the City Clerk to ensure that the necessary funds were available. Following the meeting, staff began working on preparing narratives for the identified items to be included in grant applications. This involved outlining the purpose, goals, and expected outcomes of each project, as well as detailing the specific funding needs. In addition to the narrative development, staff also initiated other necessary paperwork and administrative processes required for the grant application process. This included gathering supporting documentation, completing application forms, and ensuring compliance with any specific grant requirements.

Pictures:



Grants & Misc. Other Income/Donations/Etc.

Yellow = Working on Blue = Applied For, No Decision As Of Yet Green = Approved and/or Received Red = Did not Receive Grey = After Report

Department	Donor/Grant	Work Completed	Requested/Reason	Additional Notes	Value	City Match
Fire/Police	Blick	Applied	Back2School Bash	School Supplies	TBD	0%
Fire/Police	Operation RoundUp	Applied	Back2School Bash	School Supplies	\$10,000	0%
Police	Anonymous	Donation	Misc. Toys for Events	Small Toys To Give Away	\$50	0%
Wastewater	Water Environment Foundation (WEF)	Approved	Cover cost of travel (hotel, food, gas) for Michael Heath Graham WW3	Has to be paid directly to employee – transfer to City – late notification	\$1,500	0%
Fire	DripDrop	Applied For / Approved	3 Cases of 100 Count Dehydration Relief Power for Water	-	\$534	0%
General	Various	Approved, Received	Items for 2024 Health Fair	Late Arrivals from 2023 Health Fair	\$2,000	0%
Collection System	GEFA	Approved	Sewage Collection System – Inflow/Infiltration	Gather and provide requested information	-	-
Wastewater	Southeast Crescent Regional Commission – Critical Equipment	Working On	Replace Sprayheads and Ball Valves in Fields 1-10		\$50,000	20% (\$10,000)
Fire/Police	Geddes	Applied	Back2School Bash – School Supplies	Not Donating To Anyone This Year	TBD	0%