

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, September 12, 2023

- ✓1. Call to Order
- ✓2. Prayer
- ✓3. Pledge of Allegiance
- ✓4. Roll Call
- ✓5. Adopt Agenda
- ✓6. Adoption of Minutes—August 8, 2023 Regular Meeting; August 17, 2023 Called meeting

- ✓7. Departmental Reports
- ✓8. Clerk's Report
- ✓9. Mayor's Report
- ✓10. REACH Program Report & Announcement from Karen Ebey-Tessendorf
- ✓11. New Business
 - ✓ A. Opening of Sealed Bids for 1991 Ford Mustang LX2S; and 10ft. Jon Boat
 - B. Approval of the City's FY 2023 Tax Digest & Millage Rate
12. Old Business
 - A. Council Approval of Rezoning Variance for Property at 354 Adams Street
13. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Regular Meeting Will Be Held at 5:30pm Thursday, September 14, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
14. Mayor & Council Work Session Will Be Held 4:30pm Monday, October 2, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
15. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, October 10, 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 and Council Meeting

5 PM Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Elected Officials present were Mayor Richard Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem Sandra Sherrod, Councilmembers, Brandon Nolley, Tom Roberts, and Rav Yisrael.

City Clerk Virigina Webb was not present. Attorney John Hitchcock was not present.

Administrative Assistant Stephanie Hannah was present and responsible for the minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm by Mayor ProTem Sherrod followed by a moment of silence, The Lord's Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adopt Agenda

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

Adoption of Minutes – August 8, 2023 Regular Meeting; August 17, 2023 “Called” Meeting

Councilman Yisrael motioned to adopt the August 8, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Yisrael motioned to adopt the August 17, 2023 “Called” Meeting minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Departmental Reports – Police, Water & Wastewater

The Police Department has received a safety grant for rain gear.

Officer Tommie Walker noted that Operation Warm has provided the city with 192 new coats. The police and fire departments will organize a coat drive in October for children in need of winter jackets.

A combined grant for dogs, including dog food and treats, was awarded to the Police Department, Fire Department, and Animal Control. More information will be printed and distributed throughout the city soon.

Clerk's Report

1. Property taxes should be mailed out by the end of September, if not then by mid-October.
2. Business licenses will be mailed out by Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

Mayor's Report

1. Athens-Clark County Mayor Kelly Girtz requested all the mayors across Georgia participate in sending a letter to the governor and state lawmakers to take action on gun

safety legislation. The letter focused on reducing the increasing gun violence, background checks, focus on the specific weapon that create rapid fire, and safe storage. Forty-eight out of five hundred thirty-eight mayors signed. Mayor Haywood signed the letter in support.

2. Operation Warm-Up provided the city with 192 coats for children this winter.
3. EMC awarded the city a \$10,000 grant for school supplies, which will be passed out in late December. All supplies will go directly to students who are in need of adequate school supplies.
4. Picnic tables and benches have arrived for Pedestrian Park. The tables and benches cost \$7,100; REACH provided \$5,725, leaving the city to pay \$1,405. Councilman Roberts estimated that the Pedestrian Park rear wall will be built in the next few weeks if the weather permits.
5. The animal shelter has 17 dogs – there are 6 lab puppies, 4 chihuahuas, and 7 adult pit bulls. Adoption legal paperwork is underway for 12 of the 17 dogs.
6. The Oconee Reginal Humane Society (ORHS), located in Greene County, which is operated predominately on donations, allowed Mayor Haywood and Amanda Akins the opportunity to tour their facility to see how it was run efficiently. The ORHS will help the city find homes for those animals that are hard to be placed for adoption. The city was given leashes, dog food, blankets, towels, totaling \$3,965 in donations.
7. Circle of Friends Animal Society (CFAS) donated a portable kennel pen.
8. Walmart donated \$500 for the animal shelter, along with a donation of \$1,000 from an anonymous source.
9. The Morehouse School of Medicine showed interest in becoming a vender during the Pine Tree Festival.
10. Natural gas rates are \$12.22 per one thousand cubic feet for residential presently for the next few months, but may go up when the hard winter season arrives.
11. The financing from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) will be shared between two departments: wastewater and water. The wastewater department will receive \$2.7 million, while the water department will receive \$4.1 million. The city applied for a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the State Department of Community Affairs. In the last 27 years, the city has not received CDBG funding. The CDBG will be used to clear the wastewater treatment plant's two eight-foot-deep lagoons, each of which holds six feet of sludge. On Friday, September 1, 2023, the city was approved for the \$1 million CDBG, with the GEFA funds, the total is for a total of \$7.8 million dollars in federal funding for utilities' infrastructure.

REACH Program Report & Announcement from Karen Ebey-Tessendorf

Karen Ebey-Tessendorf, a public health district employee, indicated that the CDC funded a five-year project, and September is the last month of that funding cycle. An application for another five-year project called Support Health Intuitive in Neutering Equity (SHINE) was submitted earlier this year, including three counties: Hancock, Washington, and Baldwin. SHINE was approved for funding for the next five-year cycle on Thursday, September 7, 2023.

She thanked Mayor Haywood, the Council, and the county government for their support over the last five years and expressed interest in working together again soon.

New Business

A. Opening of Sealed Bids for 1991 Ford Mustang LX2S; and 10ft. Jon Boat

Bids for the 1991 Ford Mustang were as follows: Franklin Baker \$4,100, Colleen Baker \$6,500, Dennis Baker \$5,000, Larry Chapman \$5,010, Johnny Wilson \$1,800, Recardo Wilson \$500, Wille Hunt \$2505, Torico Wilson \$1,500 and Horace Jones \$500.

Only one bid for the 10ft. Jon boat was \$75 from Willie Hunt.

Councilman Yisrael motioned to accept the highest bid at \$6,500 from Colleen Baker for the 1991 Ford Mustang LX2S; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Yisrael motioned to accept the bid of \$75.00 from Willie Hunt for the 10 ft. Jon boat; Council Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

B. Approval of the City's FY 2023 Tax Digest & Millage Rate

Councilman Yisrael motioned to approve the FY 2023 tax digest and millage rate; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Old Business

A. Council Approval of Rezoning Variance for Property at 354 Adams Street

Councilman Roberts motioned to approve the rezoning variance for property at 354 Adams Street; Councilman Yisrael seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

City Council October Work Session will be held 4:30 pm Monday, October 2, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5 pm Tuesday, October 10, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall

Citizen's Input (Please limit Questions/ Comments to 3 Minutes)

1. Kathy Ransom, resident of the city and manager at Hancock County Library, said the library will be offering basic computer classes, along with mobile devices, internet and email basics, and cyber security over a five-week period. The classes will start in October and there will be a morning and evening class on Thursdays. The second week will be a Saturday only class. She thanks the community for all its support.
2. DeeDee Hyder, resident of the city, stated that she looks forward in using the newly installed bicycle stop at the library. She thanked the police department for their service. She also inquired if the city has hired a new chief of police yet. Mayor ProTem Sherrod stated the city does not have a chief of police yet.

She asked what could the city do about the junk cars at On the Way Motors on Jones Street, which is in the city limits, and stated that people have been illegally dumping trash there as well.

Mayor ProTem Sherrod stated that the owner of On the Way Motors would discuss with Hyder about the junk cars. She asked if there was an ethics committee for the city.

Councilman Yisrael stated he doesn't want to create a situation that will impact the owner's business or one that will impact property values. He also said if there is an ordinance to address the junk cars then the city must follow the ordinance, but if no ordinance is in place a middle ground must be found.

Councilman Roberts shared his experience with the owner of On the Way Motors, when asked if he could dump something on his property, he was told to only leave concrete and dirt to close up the gully.

Mayor Haywood explained that although the property is partly on city and county lines, Attorney Hitchcock will be needed to research the issue.

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 Yisrael motioned to go back to regular session; Councilman Roberts seconded.

There were no motions made in relationship to discussion in executive session.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.