

# AGENDA

## Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, October 10, 2023

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting;
7. Departmental Reports
8. Clerk's Report
9. Mayor's Report
10. New Business
11. Old Business
  - A. Second Reading of Ordinance Regarding Intergovernmental Agreement with County Board of Elections for Use of Equipment & Services for Upcoming City Election; Vote to Adopt Election Ordinance.
12. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Regular Meeting Will Be Held at 5:30pm Thursday, October 12, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
13. Due to Use of City Hall Council Chambers for City Election Preparation on Monday, November 6, 2023, Mayor & Council Work Session Tentatively Will Be Held at 4:30pm Tuesday, November 14, 2023 Prior to the Regular Council Meeting at 5pm
14. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, November 14, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall
15. Citizens' Input (Please limit Questions/Comments to 3 Minutes)
16. Executive Session: Legal and Personnel Business
17. Adjournment

**City of Sparta**  
**Mayor & Council Meeting**  
**5 PM Tuesday October 10, 2023**

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Councilmember Yisrael 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 – September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting**

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

**Departmental Reports - Animal Shelter, Filter, Police & Wastewater**

(See Pages 6-10)

**Police** – 311 “911” calls, 136 written citations, 50 verbal warnings, 30 speeding citations, 27 “too fast for conditions”, 3 no insurance violations, and 3 suspended and revoked licenses. Along with 74 other traffic violations and a total of 8 outstanding warrants.

**Clerk's Report**

1. Sebastian Casillas of the Department of Transportation's LTAP Program division has been invited to conduct a training program called Flagger Certification. Up to 20 participants can attend, and it will take place at City Hall on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Hancock County Road Department has been invited to take part in this training by the City of Sparta. After finishing the course, participants will receive a flagging certificate. The City of Sparta, the Hancock County Board of Commissioners, and participants will not be charged for this training.
2. The Department of Transportation in Tennille has received requests for approval regarding the Pinetree Festival Parade and the Forever 5K Run parade. The dates of both events are October 28, 2023.
3. Cedric Wright presented the R&B Southern Soul Music event at the work session on Monday, October 2, 2023, which was set for October 14, 2023, at the Old Hancock Central Football Field. Council and Mayor Haywood were given information about the event. It was requested of Mr. Wright that he secure a parade permit and show

documentation of his event insurance. The \$200 permit fee is due. Since the information request was made, there has been no more contact or correspondence.

Mayor Haywood continued by saying that he had correspondence with Mr. Wright and that he possesses the insurance documentation. Regarding the permit, Council's decision would be based on whether Mr. Wright produces the required paperwork.

4. The City Council Chambers will host the election on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Early voting begins on Monday, October 16, 2023, and ends on Friday, November 3, 2023. Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., is when polls will be open, and October 21 and 28, 2023, are the Saturday voting dates, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The deadlines for registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot are October 27, 2023 and Tuesday, October 10, 2023, respectively. The candidates that qualified for Mayor are Makesha Brown-Foster, R. Allen Haywood, (Incumbent), Julio Meija, and Lillie Reid Tripp and for City Council are James Clark, Maxine Evans, Tom Roberts, (Incumbent), and Sandra Faye Ross-Sherrod (Incumbent).

### **Mayor's Report**

1. There are currently twelve dogs housed at the animal shelter, and seven others have found homes. Every dog is up for adoption. Amanda Akins, the supervisor of wastewater, has been working hard to spread the word to the public through pictures, flyers, and future collaboration with the Oconee Humane Society (OHS).
2. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for one million dollars for the wastewater lagoons will be presented to the city on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 in Augusta.
3. On Friday, October 20, 2023 the Hi-Lo bike trail ride will be coming through the city. The city will provide water and Gatorade.
4. The FY2024 proposed budget goes out 60 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.
5. Mayor Haywood clarified that the other gatherings that had previously taken place on the football field were free and were not charged, in contrast to Cedric Wright's event. The public is invited to bring their own private items, such as coolers, so alcohol will undoubtedly be present. The city required guarantee a high level of security.
6. Vercade has sent the demo cameras that will be installed at the Wastewater facility.
7. Wednesday, October 18, 2023 will be Breast Cancer Awareness Day. The city and county signed a proclamation.
8. The Historic Preservation sign is up for the rehabilitation of the old police station. Charles Jackson has the contract; the work is over \$137,000. Mayor Haywood thanked Dip Polatty for working getting the applications done.

Dip Polatty shared it was a no match grant.

9. Property taxes will be mailed out later in the week and due Sunday, December 31, 2023 before penalties or interest.
10. Saturday, October 28, 2023 will the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Pine Tree Festival.

## **New Business**

No new businesses discussed.

## **Old Business**

### **A. Second Reading of Ordinance Regarding Intergovernmental Agreement with the County Board of Elections for Use of Equipment & Services for Upcoming City Election; Vote to Adopt Election Ordinance.**

According to City Attorney John Hitchcock, the county and the Board of Elections have been providing the city with election assistance for years, utilizing machinery in addition to specific functions. According to state law, whenever two organizations come together, there needs to be a verbal agreement and a city ordinance authorizing the county and Board of Elections to support city elections.

Monday, October 2, 2023 during a “called” meeting, the ordinance was introduced. Under the city’s charter ordinances cannot be adopted and voted on the same day it was introduced.

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the 2023 Municipal Election Ordinance; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

### **Historic Perseveration Commission (HPC) Regular Meeting Will Be Held at 5:30 PM Thursday, October 12, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall**

**Due to Use of City Hall Council Chambers for City Election Preparation on Monday, November 6, 2023, Mayor & Council Work Session Tentatively Will Be Held at 4:30 on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 Prior to the Regular Council Meeting at 5 pm**

**Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5 pm Tuesday, November 14, 2023 in Council Chambers City Hall**

### **Citizens’ Input (Please limit Questions/Comments to 3 Minutes)**

1. Paula Dixon, a county resident, asked to know more about the Urgent Health Care that Mayor Haywood brought up during the work session.  
Mayor Haywood said that the county was mainly the one handling it, so he has no further information to provide.
2. Louise McCorkle, a city resident who lives on Pine Drive, claimed that the roots growing beneath her driveway have caused the road to erode. She has previously spoken with the mayor and council, but nothing has been done to address this. She also wanted to know who owned the adjoining property.

Mayor Haywood stated that the city can only put down crusher run and ask the county to spread it.

Councilman Roberts disclosed that he had a interest in her request and that he would be happy to discuss his personal business elsewhere, due to him owning a portion of the property. As a citizen, he stated that the best course of action for the road is to simply apply crusher run throughout the whole road.

3. Tshanda Bell, a resident of the city, who lives on Hancock Street, stated that tree debris, which has been there almost a year, has been sitting in front of her home. Bell inquired what the city could do about that eyesore or if the city already plans to clean up the area.
4. Maxine Evans, resident of the county, asked the superintendent of elections what equipment will be used and if the absentee ballot box will be secured. Evans requested a meeting with City Clerk Webb to discuss issues that the community has voiced to her. Evans stated that she is paying a city natural gas fee but she is not on city gas and she felt that it should be removed from her bill, along with the city reimbursing her for more than 20 years that she had to pay for a service that she has never used. City Clerk Virginia Webb, who is the Superintendent of Elections, referred to Evan's question Attorney John Hitchcock.

Attorney Hitchcock responded that the city will use three touch screens and printers, one ballot scanner box, four poll pads, voter cards, CF memory cards, and power supply batteries.

The Secretary of State will not let the city relocate the absentee ballot box, which will be locked in a sealed room with cameras, according to City Clerk Webb, who agreed to meet with Evans.

Councilman Yisrael acknowledged Evans' grievance regarding the gas charge. He said he was concerned about it too, but when he asked questions, he was told the cost was for access to the gas on the property, regardless of how much was used.

It is an availability charge, according to attorney Hitchcock. He recommended that the city take down the meter.

Mayor ProTem Sherrod discussed her opinions on the gas availability charge, stated that a resident should not be taxed whether the meter is removed if they are not consuming gas.

5. Dee Dee Hyder, a resident of the city, inquired about the junk cars on Jones Street. According to Hyder, last year she put in a request to be put on the pave list of 2023 and Pine Dr. was in the budget for 2023. Also, there is an infestation of mosquitoes due to water that is gushing up from the ground for off Ghetts Street around almost two months.

Mayor Haywood explained that the city does not budget for the streets. The city budgets for the total amount then receives quotes as what the city can use the money for. Pine Dr. is one of the streets that is on the list, but he never promised her that it would be done. Mayor Haywood stated that Timmy Griffin, utility supervisor, has already been made aware of the issue of the water and has added it on his list.

6. Lillie Tripp, a resident of the city, stated that she had several areas of concern to address. She first asked for information on the number of those 136 tickets issued to Sparta citizens, the identity of the city's newly appointed or elected chief of police, and the people who advise him when it comes to obtaining warrants. Tripp's brother Lester Reid,

who also looks after their 91-year-old mother, turned himself in after seeing a notice about himself posted as "wanted" on the Sparta Police Department's Facebook page. She claimed that the timing of this was "very convenient while she is running for mayor." Tripp was afraid that if the police had stopped her brother, he might have been injured or killed. Tripp stated that Reid is still listed as "in custody" on the Facebook page even though he is not. She wanted everyone to know that publishing Reid's information on a public forum might have had a negative impact on her, her family, and her candidacy for mayor. Lastly, she said that Timmy Griffin, the utility supervisor, had informed her that an engineer from Atlanta would locate her gas and sewage lines so that construction could start; the contractor has not yet arrived.

7. Julio Mejia, resident of the city, suggested that the city and county give firewood to the elders in the wintertime to keep them warm.

8. James Culver, a resident of the city, questioned if the city has a code enforcer or a city manager.

Attorney Hitchcock replied that the only way to have a city manager is to rewrite the city charter.

Mayor Haywood stated that a city manager is a good idea but with the salary of \$60,000 to \$70,000 the city simply can not afford to do that.

9. Makesha Brown-Foster, resident of the city, explained why some officers may not have name tags yet due to the time where an officer was in training.

### **Executive Session: Legal and Personnel Business**

Councilman Nolley 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 Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Valisha Lawrence as a dispatcher; Councilman Roberts seconded. Councilman Yisrael voted "yes." Mayor ProTem Sherrod abstained from the vote. No discussion. Vote 3 to 1.

Councilman Roberts motioned to promote Officer Tommy Walker as Chief of Police of the Sparta Police Department; Councilman Nolley seconded. Mayor ProTem Sherrod abstained from the vote. Councilman Yisrael voted "yes." No discussion. Vote 3 to 1.

### **Adjournment**

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

## September 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

- Georgia College Volunteers have dedicated 19 hours of their time to support the animal shelter, translating to an estimated value of \$137.75 in service (based on a minimum wage rate of \$7.25 per hour). John Hancock Academy has also expressed interest in joining our volunteer efforts at the animal shelter. Staff is actively collaborating with them to organize community events in which their students can participate.
- Staff are in the process of arranging the School Supply Restock event, slated for late November or early December, to benefit the Hancock County School System. During this event, the City will distribute essential school supplies to students across elementary, middle, and high schools through partnerships with the police, fire department, and the Communities in Schools program. This initiative aims to offer students an opportunity to replenish their supplies, especially during the period when resources tend to run low and financial constraints are more pronounced.
- Staff organized a pickup of pet shelter donations in Greensboro, GA. During this initiative, staff received over \$5,000 worth of donations from Oconee Regional Humane Society and Circle of Friends Animal Shelter. These donations covered all the basic supplies the shelter would need for some time, with the commitment to provide additional supplies as requested.

### Pictures:





## Water Production

For September, the treatment plant withdrew 34.15 million gallons of water from the lake, and pumped 27.68 million gallons into the distribution system. For the same period in 2022, the totals were 29.85 million gallons from the lake and 24.96 million gallons into the system. These figures represent 13% and 10% increases, respectively.



## Other Areas

### Facility

1. The computer that manages our security camera system has crashed, and needs a new hard drive.
2. We experienced a failure of our air compressor system. This caused the plant to go offline, and a new pressure switch and regulator had to be purchased from Grainger in Macon before the plant came back online. Thanks to Jimmie Watkins for making the trip to Macon, and Timmy Griffin for making those repairs.
3. Maintenance crew also repaired water line on basins.
4. DWL Instrumentation made their quarterly visit to the plant and serviced and calibrated our equipment.

### Personnel

Several operators attended classes on Basic Water Loss through GAWP, and Advanced Drinking Water Technologies through GRWA.

### Compliance

A select group of customers were given collection bottles for this year's Lead and Copper samples. These samples are required by the US EPA and the State of Georgia, and help us to ensure that our customers have safe drinking water. All lead and copper results were well below established levels. In accordance with EPA Rules, customers who participated in this testing will be notified of their results within 30 days.



## September 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

### Sampling Results (September 6, 2023):

Parameter	Influent (Before Screen)	Effluent (After Outfall)	Monthly Limit	Overall Removal Efficiency
Rainfall	4.59 Inches		-	-
Flow MGD	0.387	0.564	0.800 MGD	-
BOD	198	16.7	50 mg/L	91.6%
TSS	63.0	14.0	90 mg/L	77.8%

### Notable Work:

- Staff conducted quarterly sampling, during which it was discovered that the E. Coli level exceeded the permitted limit in Groundwell Downgradient 2. This prompted staff to notify the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). Staff and EPD suspect that the issue may be a result of external contamination, as all neighboring groundwells registered a level of 0. In accordance with EPD, staff purged and performed a chlorination process for Groundwell Downgradient 2 to bring its E. Coli level back into compliance (0). Regular sampling of this groundwell will occur per EPD's request to monitor its ongoing quality.
- Staff purchased shelving units for the maintenance area due to overcrowding. This reorganization effort allowed the staff to become better organized, facilitating a clearer understanding of what supplies they had versus what was needed.
- A meeting was held between staff and EMI engineers to review the items slated for repair and replacement at the wastewater facility, as part of the GEFA and CDBG grants. The anticipated timeline for commencing the work is set for late 2024 or early 2025.
- Staff has initiated the process of cutting down the trees along the fence line facing the road. This passive security action is being taken to discourage individuals from stopping in the road to obscure themselves from the cameras. By removing these trees, we aim to improve the visibility of our camera system, while aligning with the groundskeeping requirements set forth by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).
- Staff noticed an unusual increase in influent trash as well as water flow during September. In response, staff informed the prison authorities about this issue. Following their notification, corrective measures were taken to address and resolve the situation by the City and the prison. During this period, the influent flap on the right side of the auger had experienced a malfunction. Staff took action to repair the flap, ensuring that it has been functioning correctly since the repair was completed.
- The backhoe underwent a disassembly process to determine the cause of a hydraulic fluid leak. A failed seal was discovered and staff ordered the necessary parts to address the issue. Staff are currently waiting on the parts to arrive.
- The Huber Ro9 had an actuator which failed and led to a disruption in the supply of water for the pressure and wash zone. Additionally, a "Fatal 31 Error" was displayed on the screen, indicating the need for a replacement LCD component. The Utilities Director ordered the necessary parts and staff is awaiting their arrival to proceed with the repair.
- Staff recently received several loads of gravel and filled multiple large holes around the facility. These holes posed a potential hazard to vehicles, and addressing them promptly will help prevent any future damage or accidents.

## September 2023 Monthly Report For City Council

- Staff expanded the area around the gate and the entrance of the lift station driveway (located behind the wastewater plant). This was necessary due to the encroaching growth of the tree line. This expansion not only provides more room for staff to maneuver but also enhances safety, especially during rainy and slippery conditions, by reducing the risk of accidents.
- To prevent the spray fields hay grass from encroaching on fence lines and to create accessible paths for staff to reach the wells, the edges of the fields were cut back. This maintenance measure ensures the integrity of the fence lines and facilitates safe access for staff to the well locations.
- Each day at the wastewater plant, the staff diligently carried out a range of vital operational tasks. These included monitoring pH and dissolved oxygen levels and making adjustments. Performing entire facility checks which conducted three times daily - upon arrival, after lunch, and before leaving. Equipment calibration and record-keeping were also part of their routine, alongside gate, field, and lift station inspections. Staff also ensure the plant's efficiency by cleaning the influent daily and meticulously recording operational data and updating logbooks. Additionally, staff operate the pumps as necessary to manage the storage pond level. These tasks are crucial for maintaining the plant's functionality and compliance with environmental standards.

### Other Notable Items:

- The farmers initiated the re-cutting of Fields 1-5 on September 30, addressing concerns about grass height and the necessity of meeting the annual soil sampling requirements. The farmers' contract is set to conclude in October 2023. Consequently, staff members have engaged in discussions with the Utilities Director regarding the prospect of monthly to quarterly field cutting to ensure optimal growth and the functionality of the sprayheads.
- The gates were found to be open, although staff had confirmed that they were closed before leaving. This issue was brought to staff's attention by the State, and as a result, new specialized locks are being ordered by the Utilities Director to address the situation.
- Amanda Martin Akins participated in a weeklong Water Class III training class as part of her preparation for the Water Class III exam and lead into the Water Laboratory class.
- On September 21, 2023, Mitchell Ray Perritt Jr. participated in a Water Distribution class. The course curriculum encompassed subjects such as hydrants, valves, service brass, pipe repair, leak detection, and pressure management. This provided him with 6 CEUS for his license renewal.
- Mitchell Ray Perritt Jr. came off of light duty on Thursday, September 14, 2023, after being on light duty for approximately 3 months. He is anticipated to begin his distribution training with the Utilities Director as time allows.
- On September 14, 2023, the camera system experienced a complete outage. IT was notified the following day when the system did not resume normal operation after storm. However, due to scheduling constraints, IT was unable to respond immediately, and the system remained down for a week. The issue was resolved, and the camera system was restored to normal. Staff have discussed the possibility of updating the camera system with the Utility Director due to the ongoing issues with the system and the prison.
- State authorities successfully intercepted and prevented five separate attempts to smuggle items into the facility for the prison. Although two additional attempts were observed, they eluded capture. State and staff suspect further attempts.

## 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
Pet Shelter	Walmart Community Grants	Applied	General Funding Check	Sandersville Walmart – Still Have Requests in With Eatonton & Milledgeville	\$500	0%
Pet Shelter	Oconee Regional Humane Society	Applied, Approved	Misc. Dog Items	Blankets, Dogs Beds, Dog Food, Towels	\$5,475	0%
Pet Shelter	Circle of Friends	Applied, Approved	Misc. Dog Items + Check	\$1,000 Check + Another TBD Check Expected + Misc. Items (Kennels, Cages, Blankets, Etc.) + Custom Embroidered Blankets		0%
Pet Shelter	Otterly Pets	Received	Misc. Dog Items	\$115 Check, Dog Toys, Shampoos, and Toothbrushes	\$350	0%
Pet Shelter	Petfinder Pro	Approved, Received	Part of Animal Shelter Membership	Insulated Bag, Leashes, Pens, Sticky Nots, Dog Scoops, Umbrella, Clips	\$28	0%
Pet Shelter	American Dog	Applied, Approved	Misc. Dog Items	Toys	\$90	0%
Police Department	Auto Club Group	Applied, Approved, Received	12 High Visibility Rainsuits 12 High Visibility Breakaway Vests	Officer Safety	\$744	0%
Fire Department	Auto Club Group	Applied, Approved, Received	3 Fire Suppression Blankets	Vehicle Fires – One for Each Pumper	\$8,100	0%
General	Network For Good	Applied, Approved, Received	Items for Health Fair Giveaway	Received 200 Shampoo, Conditioner, Face Mask, and Exfoliating Pads	\$2,080	0%
Pet Shelter	Off The Chain	Applied, Approved	10 x 10 x 6 Canopy Dog Kennels – Qty: 5	Delivery in October	\$2,150	0%
Wastewater	GEFA	Meetings	Meet with Engineer	Determine Items for Grant & Future Applications	TBD	\$100,000
Fire Department	Leary Foundation	Pre-Application	Extraction Washer and Express Dryer	May Change With Full Application Approved for To Apply For Full Application on 9-25	\$13,000	0%
Pet Shelter	Kong Toys	Applied	Toys	-	TBD	0%
Pet Shelter	Bow Wow Buddies	Applied	Medical Care for Dog	Cover Cost of Vet Visits and Care	TBD	0%
Police Department	Walmart Community Grants	Applied	Flock Cameras	Assist with Cost	TBD	0%