

# AGENDA

## Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, January 9, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting
7. Adoption of Minutes --- December 28, 2023 Called Meeting
8. Clerk's Report
9. Department Reports
10. Mayor's Report
11. Lillie Barnes & Beverly Lundy Presentation Regarding Black History Program in February
12. Old Business
13. New Business
14. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Tuesday, February 5, 2024
15. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, February 13, 2024
16. City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, January 15, 2024 in Observance of Martin Luther King Holiday
17. Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30pm Thursday, January 11, 2024 in City Hall
18. Citizens' Input
19. Executive Session
20. Adjournment

**City Of Sparta**  
**Mayor & Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

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

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem Yisrael at 5PM followed by a Moment of Silence, The Lord's Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Adopt Agenda**

Mayor ProTem Yisrael motioned to add zoning to the agenda; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

**Adoption of Minutes – December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting**

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote not unanimous. Councilwoman Sherrod abstained from the vote.

**Adoption of Minutes – December 28, 2023 “Called” Meeting**

Councilman Nolley motioned to adopt December 28, 2023 “Called” Meeting Minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. Mayor ProTem Yisrael and Councilwoman Sherrod voted “No.” Mayor Haywood voted “Yes.” Vote 3-2.

**Clerk’s Report**

1. The employee health insurance premiums have increased and the employees will have an increase in their portion of the payment for this benefit. The city provides a \$25,000 life insurance benefit for each full-time employee, EVAC (lift flight) & offers a retirement plan and contributes 3% of their salary along with employees contribution.
2. The property insurance & liability insurance with GIRMA is up for renewal. There is a 3-year property appraisal provided by the company. There are 2 webinars scheduled to help in the process.
3. The total amount of 2023 Property Taxes collected as of Monday, January 8, 2024, is \$149,788.

**Departmental Reports – Police**

(See Page 5)

The 2nd Annual Christmas Toy Drive, according to Chief Tommie Walker, was a success. Through the drive, more than 125 to 130 kids were able to receive gifts over the Christmas holiday weekend. The remaining toys were donated to a different organization so they could keep giving presents to other kids. Compared to the previous year, he had a greater partnership and was grateful for the city's support. Throughout the summer, he hopes to accomplish more.

## **Mayor's Report**

1. Attorney John Hitchcock stated that McMullen is not currently representing Cherie Harriston. After failed attempts to make contact with Harriston, a letter was sent to her Tuesday, January 9, 2024. The animals at the residence can be seized.
2. In the January edition of Georgia Trend Magazine, Sparta-Hancock County is highlighted.
3. The benefits for city employees has increased. The city is currently researching other insurance options for cost comparison.
4. The GEFA "Principal Forgiveness" projects will cost \$4.1 million for water and \$2.7 million for wastewater. After years of working with the City of Sparta, Jerry Hood, the owner of EMI, has begun the lengthy CDBG process with the lagoons and GEFA with water and waste water, including a half-million-dollar tank, which will start in 2025.
5. The cost of electricity and chemicals have increased. Overdue utility bills will be reviewed. If anyone faces hardships please come to city hall and speak to the utility clerks to ensure that the service is not interrupted.

## **Lillie Barnes & Beverly Lundy Hill Presentation Regarding Black History Program in February**

Lillie Barnes and Beverly Lundy Hill proposed that on Thursday, February 1, 2024 the City help educate the community by creating a banner project that celebrates black history around the city, which will be included on city's website and in the city's local organ, The Sparta Ishmaelite.

A Black History Program will be held in mid-February inviting several families to attend who have helped play a pivotal role in the black history in Hancock County to thank their families for the contribution.

Mayor Haywood stated that it is a great idea to teach the public more about black history.

Councilman Roberts motioned to accept the proposal; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

## **Old Business**

Attorney John Hitchcock stated that after researching the route that the city could take pertaining to "in-law apartment" in the R1 zoning district at an existing house, an amendment to the city's zoning ordinance by adding to the Special Use Permit Ordinance a provision to allow relative residences in R1 and R2 districts. Provisions will include that the dwelling unit must be accessible for the interior of the principal structure for example a bonus room, garage, or basement. Council could always vote to change these provisions, but cannot change R1 district into a multifamily district.

Mayor ProTem Yisrael inquired that if Council could make a provision that the dwelling unit doesn't have to attached at all.

Attorney Hitchcock stated yes, but under the new zoning law there is much confusion and he will have to research further.

Currently under the old zoning law, it must be advertised and posted on the property and have a hearing and Council would have vote to change its use.

With the new law, the Council will have to hold two regular meetings, have to be at least 21 days apart, hold two public hearings, at least three months but not more than nine months before Council will be able to vote on it, send a notice in the mail to every effective property owner and post every effective property unless there are more than 500 effective properties in which case the City can post a notice every 500 feet of the streets in that area.

More research will have to be done to determine the proper procedure to answer each concern.

Mayor ProTem Yisrael explained that there is a housing shortage county wide and in the city.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

**Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Tuesday, February 5, 2024**

**Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5 pm Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

**City Hall Will be Closed Monday, January 15, 2023 in Observance of Martin Luther King Holiday**

**Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30 pm Thursday, January 11, 2024**

### **Citizens' Input**

Maria Rodrigues, resident of the city, who lives on Maiden Lane, stated that she was glad the city was able to send a letter to Cherie Harriston and asked if it was binding letter by law that she received.

Attorney Hitchcock stated that he could only mail out letters but he could not make anyone respond to the letter. He stated that in the letter Harrison had two weeks to respond or the City would have to take further action.

Dee Dee Hyder, resident of the city, asked to read the article in the Georgia Trend Magazine.

Frank Meeks, a resident of the city, who recently rescued a puppy, is worried about the dogs in his area. Concerns have been raised about the possibility of the disease spreading due to a possible case of mange in another dog. He would like to volunteer at the shelter and inquired as to what could be done for the dogs.

Mayor Haywood responded that there are currently three employees employed at the animal shelter. There are currently 18 dogs that are in the shelter. The City has received donated cages and kennels with help of Circle of Friends in Greensboro. There have been five adoptions. The City does not take surrenders.

Paula Dixon, a resident of the county, stated that the idea for Black History Month is amazing. She thanks Lillie Barnes and Beverly Lundy Hill for their contribution to educating the public; she encouraged all to donate what they could to support the success of the project.

Harold Simmons, a resident of the Baldwin County, stated that he learned a lot his history and partnered with Beverly Lundy to put out information on the Black History Program.

### **Executive Session**

There was no executive session.

### **Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 pm.



**CITY OF SPARTA**

**POLICE**

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

# **JANUARY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING**

## **SPARTA POLICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**

**(STATS BELOW ARE FROM THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023)**

**236 - TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE**

**66 - TOTAL WRITTEN TRAFFIC CITATIONS**

**42 - TRAFFIC VIOLATION WARNINGS**

**10 - ARREST**

**6 - STATE WARRANTS ISSUED**

### **PREVIOUS MONTH STATS: NOVEMBER 2023**

**191 - TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE**

**44 - TOTAL WRITTEN CITATIONS**

**34 - TRAFFIC VIOLATION WARNINGS**

**1 - STATE WARRANTS ISSUED**

**4 - ARREST**

**- 2023 ANNUAL REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED DURING FEBRUARY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING**