

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, July 9, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—May 14, 2024 Regular Meeting; Minutes of June 11, 2024 Regular Meeting (Informational with no quorum present to vote)
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports
9. Mayor's Report
10. Council Members Questions/Comments
11. Second Reading of Multiple Residence Ordinance
12. Second Reading of Purchasing Procedure Ordinance & Vote to Approve
13. Resolution to Approve TSPLOST (TIA Phase 1) Projects in City of Sparta
 - A. Adam Street Improvements from Maiden Lane to Hwy.15, P.I. 0017591
 - B. Maiden Lane/Rabun Street Resurfacing, P.I. 0017592
14. Old Business
15. New Business
16. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, August 5, 2024
17. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, August 13, 2024
18. Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30pm Thursday, July 11, 2024 in City Hall
19. Citizens' Input
20. Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters
21. Adjournment

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Meeting
5pm Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Elected Officials present were Mayor R. Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem Rav Yisrael, Councilmembers Brandon Nolley, Tom Roberts. Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod arrived late, at 5:10 p.m.

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

Administrative Assistant Stephanie Hannah was present.

Mayor ProTem Yisrael called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., with a moment of silence followed by the Lord's Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Haywood welcomed special guests Jessica Hayes and Beth Goosley, both from a Congressman Mike Collins' office. They distributed informative brochures about the services they provide to the community. "We are here to provide support and resources to your community," Jessica Hayes said, emphasizing their role in assisting residents. Beth Goosley added, "Thank you for allowing us to share information about our services," expressing her appreciation for the opportunity to interact with the local government and its citizens.

Adopt Agenda

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Agenda approved.

Adoption of Minutes – May 14, 2024 Regular Meeting; Minutes of June 11, 2024 Regular Meeting (Informational with no quorum present to vote)

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt May 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Minutes approved.

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt June 11, 2024 Regular Meeting (Informational); Councilman Nolley seconded. Mayor ProTem Yisrael abstained due to not being present at the June 11th meeting. Vote 2 to 1. Minutes approved.

Clerk's Report

1. Stephanie Hannah, Administrative Assistant, announced a big grant application for \$39,714.06 through the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG). "This grant will significantly aid in the improvement of our streets, including Jamie Kennedy, Jones, Willis, Bell, Providence, Elm, and others," she said, underscoring the need for financial support for the city's infrastructure. Once accepted and awarded, the project will be bid

on through the Georgia Local Government Access Marketplace. It was resubmitted after being returned for minor revisions.

2. The Department of Public Health, City of Sparta, and Family Connection will host a "Sparta-Hancock County Day Back to School Bash" for Hancock County children on Saturday, July 27, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The purpose is to collaborate with other churches, organizations, businesses, individuals, and so on to ensure that Hancock County children have access to free immunizations, immunization records, and school supplies.
3. The Department of Public Health, City of Sparta, and Family Connection will host a "Sparta-Hancock County Day Back to School Bash" for Hancock County children on Saturday, July 27, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The purpose is to collaborate with other churches, organizations, businesses, individuals, and so on to ensure that Hancock County children have access to free immunizations, immunization records, and school supplies.
4. The US Department of Defense, in collaboration with the CSRA Regional Commission and the local health department, is offering an Innovative Readiness Training from July 2nd to July 12th, 2024, to citizens aged 2 and up who are underinsured, uninsured, or in need of excellent care at no cost to the patient. It is hosted in the Health Department from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day except July 4th and 9th, when it is 9 a.m.-12 noon. For further information, call (706) 210-2000.

Departmental Reports - Police, Wastewater, Street, and Animal Shelter

(See Pages 6-18)

Mayor's Report

1. Mayor Haywood acknowledged Timmy Griffin's retirement and Logan Griffin's resignation, recognizing their contributions to the community. "Their contributions have been invaluable, and they will be missed," he said. Amanda Akins is now the utility administrator.
2. According to the 2023 census, the city has an estimated population of 1,320, which affects federal funding allocations. This demographic data is critical for planning and resource allocation.
3. Mayor Haywood prioritized selecting the best bid for upcoming street repairs to ensure quality infrastructure improvements. "It's crucial we select the best bid to ensure quality repairs," Haywood pointed out. The city is seeking bids for some \$140,000 in street repairs & paving. Southern Asphalt has provided a quote for patching and paving.
4. The council discussed the budget review process for the upcoming fiscal year, emphasizing the importance of financial planning and resource allocation to meet the city's needs. Mayor Haywood, City Clerk Virginia Webb, and City Treasurer Deborah Butts will work together to finish the review.

5. Progressive Steps will be giving out meals at the old hospital parking lot from 12 noon to 1pm each Tuesday in July.

Council Members Questions/ Comments

There were no questions or comments.

Second Reading of Multiple Residence Ordinance

According to Attorney John Hitchcock, a change in the zoning ordinance must be advertised first, followed by a hearing. Following a discussion with City Clerk Webb, the required hearing will take place before the regular meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. If the council so chooses, they can vote on it at that time. Hitchcock explained that the ordinance allows two separate homes to be built on property zoned R1, which is typically a single property.

Second Reading of Purchasing Procedure Ordinance & Vote to Approve

Attorney John Hitchcock explained that any purchase or payment of more than \$10,000 will require the approval of two council members, which does not require a formal vote at a council meeting but can be obtained by signing a purchase or check approval form. Deborah Butts, City Treasurer, shall keep all signed approval forms. Nothing in this ordinance requires council approval for any purchases and payments that were specifically budgeted in the city's annual budget process, such as day-to-day operations, or that are pursuant to a contract approved by council under Section 6 of the city charter.

Similarly, no council approval should be required for purchases or payments made under a grant or loan agreement with the USDA, GSA, DCA, or any other governmental entity or private lender, provided that the city council has previously approved the loan or grant application. Councilman Roberts seconded Councilman Nolley's motion to approve the Purchasing Procedure Ordinance. There is no discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod declined to vote which serves as a "no" vote. Ordinance passed 3-1.

Resolution to Approve TSPLOST (TIA Phase 1) Projects in City of Sparta

A. Adams Street Improvements from Maiden Lane to Hwy.15, P.I. 0017591

Attorney Hitchcock stated the resolution was to accept the TSPLOST projects which are designated back in Phase 1 of the 2022 project list. Adams Street will be resurfaced.

Councilman Roberts motioned to approve the resolution; Council Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote, which serves as a "no" vote. Motion passed 3-1.

B. Maiden Lane/ Rabun Street Resurfacing, P.I. 0017592

Councilman Roberts motioned to approve P.I. 0017592; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote which serves as a “no” vote. Motion passed 3-1.

Old Business

Mayor ProTem Yisrael requested an update on the ordinances.

Attorney Hitchcock shared that Municode has received the ordinances. Municode will update the ordinances twice a year, according to his understanding, but he will contact the company for more clarification.

New Business

There was no new business.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, August 5, 2024

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5 PM Tuesday, August 13, 2024

Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30 pm Thursday, July 11, 2024 in City Hall

Citizens' Input

DeeDee Hyder, a city resident, inquired as to who the city inspector was in Timmy Griffin's absence; what the time frame for Ghattis Street repairs was; and what could be done to help the homeless in the community find shelter.

Mayor Haywood responded that, while Timmy Griffin is no longer an employee of the city, he will provide needed services as a contractor and cooperate to ensure a smooth transition until a more permanent solution is found. Mayor Haywood revealed that Ghattis Street work is scheduled in TIA Phase One (2023-2025). It was approved for \$409,820 to redo the Ghattis Street Extension to address the drainage issues. However, the cost will be reevaluated in order to possibly reduce it. Finally, Mayor Haywood commented on the community's homeless situation explaining that there are no funds in the city's budget for homeless services. He did suggest that there are several churches and citizens who are helping to house the homeless.

Paula Barnes, a county resident, stated that she had submitted a permit request for the mobile Boys & Girls Club event at the old HCHS football field and wanted to know the status of it.

Administrative Assistant Hannah responded that the county/BOE usually informs the city when requests are made to use that locale; only then can Hannah stamp it and show that it has been approved. The city's only concern is that adequate security measures are taken when events /gatherings are held within the city.

Mayor Haywood added that Ms. Barnes should simply notify the city when she needed to use the area.

Executive Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go into executive session to discuss personnel and legal issues; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote which serves as a "no" vote. Motion passed 3-1.

Back to Executive Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go back to regular session; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote which serves as a "no" vote. Motion passed 3-1.

Mayor ProTem Yisrael asked that any motion be made to address issues discussed in executive session. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.

May and June 2024 - Monthly Report for City Council - Animal Shelter

1. Department of Agriculture Report:

- The monthly report for April was submitted to the Department of Agriculture on May 1, 2024. The monthly report for May was submitted to the Department of Agriculture on June 5th. This report ensures our compliance with state regulations and keeps the department updated on our operations and animal care standards.

2. Rescues and Intakes

- In May 2024, we had 11 intakes. Nine were transferred to LOHS, while two (Dixie and Lil Bit) required medical attention for mange and starvation/dehydration.
- Sprocket was adopted in May 2024 after being at the shelter for over a year.
- Lil Bit was transferred to LOHS in June 2024 after recovering from mange.
- As of the end of June 2024, the animal shelter has 16 dogs in its care.
- Staff have contacted several rescues to arrange for the relocation of some dogs, hoping to help to manage our capacity and provide the animals with new opportunities for adoption. So far, all nearby shelters and rescues have stated that they are full as well.
- The shelter had three new intakes (Buddy, Bonnie, and Clyde) in the month of June. These animals were given medical examinations, vaccinations, and placed into our care program until they were able to be posted for adoption or transfer to another shelter.
- Bonnie and Clyde (Chi's) had to be held for impoundment until the proper paperwork was processed releasing the dogs to the shelter due to their intake situation.
- A stray dog was sighted in early June. Staff were unable to locate the dog. This report came in from the Police Department after a citizen saw the dog attack a kitten.

3. Animal Care and Health

- In June, two dogs (Dixie and Buddy) scheduled for spaying and neutering were successfully fixed. This procedure is part of our ongoing efforts to control the pet population and ensure the health of the animals.
- In June, two dogs (Dixie and Lil Bit) were vaccinated and heartworm tested in June. Keeping up with vaccinations is essential for preventing disease outbreaks within the shelter.
- Mona was put on allergy medication to help reduce her skin irritation issues at the recommend of the new vet tech. She is showing improvement already.
- Flea, tick, and heartworm medication was applied to the dogs in May and June to keep pests under control. Regular pest control medication is essential for preventing infestations and ensuring a healthy environment for the animals.
- Daily cleaning and sterilization were performed throughout the month of May and June, ensuring that all animal areas remained sanitary. Additionally, the animals were fed and watered daily.
- The dogs received daily enrichment and exercise to keep them physically and mentally stimulated. They also enjoyed daily dental treats, which help maintain their oral health.
- Record-keeping information on the dogs was updated for the month of May and June. Accurate records are vital for tracking the health, treatment, and progress of each animal.
- The remaining black labs from the fire on Maiden Lane are showing great improvement with the new staff and are becoming social. Several are now able to be walked and petted.

May and June 2024 - Monthly Report for City Council - Animal Shelter

4. Facility Maintenance

- The office area and storage building were labeled for better organization. This ensures that staff can easily find supplies and maintain an efficient workflow.
- Demon Max and Bifenthrin insecticide were sprayed around the animal shelter area.
- Weed killer was sprayed in areas that needed it to maintain the yard. Proper yard maintenance ensures a safe and pleasant environment for the animals.
- Holes were filled in and fencing repair through June where dogs damaged them.

5. Staffing

- An animal care specialist was hired in May. She will help provide socialization and enrichment for the dogs to help make them adoptable. Her job will include walking the dogs, leash training, teaching tricks, and making the dogs comfortable with humans so they can become adoptable or transferable.
- A vet tech was hired in June. This addition to our staff will enhance our ability to provide medical care and support to the animals. She will check the dogs weekly and provide recommendations, provide grooming (bathing and nail clipping), as well as assist in obtaining donations and with adoption events.

6. Events and Donations

- On June 15th, the shelter attended an adoption event. This event was a opportunity for the community to meet and potentially adopt animals from the shelter. It also helped raise awareness about the shelter's mission and the animals available for adoption. We received a large uptick of followers on Facebook following the event.
- Staff signed up to participate in the Sparta-Hancock Day event on July 27, 2024 in an effort to get dogs adopted and bring attention to the animal shelter.
- We received a generous donation of dog food from the Oconee Regional Humane Society (ORHS), now called Lake Oconee Humane Society (LOHS). Additional dog food donations were received from Tractor Supply in Milledgeville. These donations are crucial for maintaining the health and well-being of the animals in our care.
- Patty's Furtopia donated a tent for adoption events, volunteer t-shirts, digital scale for weighing the dogs, and stuffed animals.
- Citizens of Sparta dropped off gently used blankets, pillows, and towels for the dogs.
- Kong Toys sent a box of nearly indestructible toys (\$300 value) that treats can be placed inside of for enrichment purposes.
- An 8x10 storage building was delivered to the animal shelter in late May for storage of supplies. Staff removed all extra supplies from the various departments they were stored with and moved them into the storage building in June. Shelves were also built out of scrap wood by staff. Shelving is not finished as more wood is needed.

7. Grants Received

- Several grants were applied for in June for the animal shelter. We are waiting on updates for the status of all these grants.

May and June 2024 - Monthly Report for City Council - Animal Shelter

- We received a \$1,000 grant from Bow Wow Buddies for the care of Lil' Bit. This grant will help cover medical and other care expenses for Lil' Bit.
- We received a \$3,000 grant from the Bissell Pet Foundation to install fans in the kennels to help with the heat. Currently, we are working on getting quotes for the installation of these fans.
- We received approval to participate in the Empty the Shelter program. It will take place in July 2024 and will cover \$50 of the adoption fee for adopted dogs. It runs from July 8 to 30, 2024.
- Approved to provide free and low-cost rabies clinics in 2025 from People and Pets Projects.
- We did not receive the Sterilization Grant from the Department of Agriculture due to a failure to submit reports under the prior administration. We should be eligible next year as reports are submitted monthly.



CITY OF SPARTA

POLICE

Tommie Walker, Jr.
Chief of Police

365 SPRING STREET - SPARTA, GEORGIA - 31087
OFFICE: 706-444-5777 / FAX: 706-444-8827

JULY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

SPARTA POLICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

(STATS BELOW ARE FROM THE MONTH OF JUNE 2024)

204 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

82 – TOTAL WRITTEN TRAFFIC CITATIONS

- 34 – SPEEDING
- 15 – NO SEATBELT
- 2 – DUI
- 1 – SUSPENDED LICENSE
- 27 – OTHER TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

27 – TRAFFIC VIOLATION WARNINGS

13 – STATE WARRANTS ISSUED

17 – ARREST

FYI:

On July 2, 2024 officers arrested Jamius A. Pearson, a 23-year-old black male, of Sparta, GA in connection with the robbery of BNB PAC & SAC 12166 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087

On July 9, 2024, officers arrested Jamiren Marshad Barr, a 26-year-old Black male from Okolona, Mississippi, on felony charges of Forgery in the Third Degree and Deposit Account Fraud. On Thursday, June 6, 2024, the City of Sparta Accounts Division discovered and reported that a check for \$11,855.29 was deposited into a checking account owned by Jamiren Marshad Barr. Barr is currently awaiting a bond hearing at Hancock County Detention Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

One Day with a COP camp. July 15 & 29, 2024. Attendees must be up rising 8th thru 12th graders. – Thankful for those who have contributed to the event so far: Sparta Batist Church, ACE Hardware – Sparta, Rooms U Love – Mr. & Mrs. Rodriguez.

PREVIOUS MONTH STATS: APRIL 2024

226 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

127 – TOTAL WRITTEN CITATIONS

11 – TRAFFIC VIOLATION WARNINGS

5 – STATE WARRANTS ISSUED

2 – ARREST



CITY OF SPARTA

Tommie Walker, Jr.
Chief of Police

POLICE

60 MONUMENT SQUARE - SPARTA, GEORGIA - 31087
OFFICE: 706-444-5777 / FAX: 706-444-0827

July 2, 2024

****Press Release****

BNB PAC & SAC Robbery Suspect Arrested

On Tuesday, July 2, 2024, officers arrested Jamius Amphitriton Pearson, a 23-year-old black male, in connection with the robbery of BNB PAC & SAC 12166 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087.

On Friday, June 7, 2024, around 10:49 PM, Pearson entered BNB PAC & SAC wearing what appeared to be a white paint suit, blue gloves, a dark-colored mask, and dirty white tennis shoes. Pearson walked behind the counter, took the money box, and exited the store.

Officers obtained a search warrant and searched his residence and vehicle. During the search, officers located items connecting him to the robbery, leading to his arrest. Officers also discovered drugs during the search. Pearson has been booked into Hancock County Detention Center and is awaiting a bond hearing. Pearson is charged with the following:

- Robbery (OCGA 16-8-40)
- Wearing a mask, hood, or device that conceals identity (OCGA 16-11-38)
- Purchase, possession, manufacture, distribution, or sale of controlled substances or marijuana (OCGA 16-13-30)
- Possession and use of drug-related objects (OCGA 16-13-32.2)

Tommie Walker, Jr.

Tommie Walker, Jr.
Chief of Police



CITY OF SPARTA

POLICE

Tommie Walker, Jr.
Chief of Police

80 MONUMENT SQUARE - SPARTA, GEORGIA - 31087
OFFICE: 706-444-5777 / FAX: 706-444-0827

July 9, 2024

****Press Release****
Forgery Suspect Arrested

On Tuesday, July 9, 2024, officers arrested Jamiren Marshad Barr, a 26-year-old Black male from Okolona, Mississippi, on felony charges of Forgery in the Third Degree and Deposit Account Fraud.

On Thursday, June 6, 2024, the City of Sparta Accounts Division discovered that a check for \$11,855.29 was deposited into a checking account owned by Jamiren Marshad Barr. The check was originally written to Ryland Environmental, Inc. - Macon Division. On the above date Barr turned himself in to officers without incident at Sparta Police Department. He has since been booked and processed and is now being held at Hancock County Detention Center awaiting a bond hearing.

Barr is charged with the following:

- Forgery in the Third Degree (OCGA 16-9-1(d))
- Deposit Account Fraud (OCGA 16-9-20(b)(3))

Tommie Walker, Jr.

Tommie Walker, Jr.
Chief of Police

During June, the Public Works diligently carried out a range of essential maintenance and support activities throughout the city. The following report categorizes and elaborates on the key tasks performed:

1. **Overgrowth on City Streets:** The street department focused on managing overgrown vegetation to maintain clear and safe roadways. Overgrowth was cut back on the following streets: Wiley, Myrtle, Parkway, Lakeview, and Hancock (1.74 Miles or 12.42% of the roadways).
2. **Water Tower:** Overgrowth was also addressed underneath the water tower on Jamie Kennedy Blvd to ensure clear access and improve the area's appearance. The area appeared not to have been cut in several years.
3. **Courthouse Square Incident:** The street department assisted the police department following an incident where an 18-wheeler accidentally damaged streetlights and a sign on Courthouse Square. This assistance ensured the area was made safe promptly.
4. **Storm Response:** During a recent storm, a limb fell near the intersection of Wiley and Adams Street. The department erected road closure signs and cleared the debris to restore safe passage for vehicles and pedestrians.
5. **Utility Department Assistance:** The street department provided essential support to the Utility Department by cutting debris from 12 lift stations, ensuring these critical facilities remained operational.
6. **Collaboration with DOT and GA Power:** The street department assisted the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Georgia Power with cleaning up fallen limbs on Hancock and Lakeview Streets. This collaborative effort helped to quickly restore safety and functionality to these areas.
7. **Sign Installation:** A "No Thru Trucks" sign was installed on Ghattis Street to manage traffic flow and enhance safety in residential areas.
8. **Mini Excavator Tracks:** Replacement tracks for the mini excavator were ordered by the street department and subsequently installed by Water Distribution staff.
9. **Routine Maintenance:** Ongoing maintenance was performed on various equipment to ensure their optimal functionality. This includes: Weed eaters, lawn mowers, pole saws, bobcat, tractors, and other essential equipment.

The street department's efforts in June ensured that our city's infrastructure remained safe, clean, and functional. A proactive vegetation management, quick response to incidents and emergencies, and collaboration with other departments have been instrumental in maintaining the quality of life for our residents.

Photos for June 2024 Reports

Wastewater

Lagoon Turnover With Summer Weather
2.5 Ft Average of Sludge - CDBG Dredge



Removal of Baby Deer from Lagoons
Summer means increase animal rescues



Water Color Samples for Summer



UTV Wreck at Behind Gate



Photos for June 2024 Reports

Animal Shelter

Sprocket (First Shelter Dog) Adopted



9 Puppies Dropped off at Animal Shelter



Mange on New Intake (Lil Bit)



New Storage Shed



Photos for June 2024 Reports

Public Works (Street Dept)

Broken Tractor Arm



Skid Steers Tracks



Cutting trees and grass at Water Towers



1. **Community Events and Outreach**

- **Hancock Sparta Day:** Hancock Sparta Day is scheduled to take place on July 27, 2024, from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Department of Public Health (DPH). This back-to-school event aims to support students and families as they prepare for the upcoming school year. With twenty vendors registered, the event promises a variety of free services and school supplies to ensure a successful and beneficial experience for all attendees. This initiative highlights the City's commitment to education and community support, providing essential resources for students and families in need.
- **Employee Appreciation Event** In recognition of the hard work and dedication of city employees, Sparta hosted an employee appreciation event valued at over \$3,000. The event was for its 42 employees and served as an opportunity to acknowledge their contributions to the community. Such events are crucial for boosting morale, fostering a positive work environment, and reinforcing the value of each team member's efforts.
- **GA Cities Week Coloring Contest:** As part of GA Cities Week in late April, the City organized a coloring contest for community members. This initiative aimed to engage the community, particularly children, in a creative activity that celebrates the spirit of the city. Three winners were selected in late May, providing recognition and encouragement for young artists. Events like these foster a sense of community and pride among residents, while also highlighting the City's commitment to cultural and artistic activities.

2. **Workforce and Employment Initiatives**

- **Workforce Development Relocation:** Workforce Development has relocated to Augusta, GA, and the City of Sparta is actively seeking to participate in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) program and Incumbent Worker Program. These programs are designed to support workforce development by subsidizing 50% of employees' salaries for the first six months after hire and covering training expenses after six months of hire.
- **Veteran Employment Support:** The City is collaborating with the Veterans Administration to secure supplemental pay for veteran employees through their career center. This initiative aims to provide additional financial support to veterans, acknowledging their service and aiding their transition into civilian employment.
- **Job Descriptions and Postings:** The City has created and posted job descriptions for three critical positions: a Public Works Laborer, a Water/Sewer Department Lead, and a Natural Gas Department Lead. These roles are essential for maintaining and improving the City's infrastructure and services. The Public Works Laborer will assist in various maintenance tasks, the Water/Sewer Department Lead will oversee water and sewer operations, and the Natural Gas Department Lead will manage the natural gas services.

3. **Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Preparedness**
 - **Hazard Mitigation Plan:** In preparation for the 2024 Hazard Mitigation plan, staff have provided crucial information to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission (CSRARC) regarding City properties. A meeting is scheduled for August to discuss and finalize the plan.
 - **Fire Department Support:** The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has approved a donation of a pallet of water, valued at \$250, for the Sparta fire department. This support ensures that firefighters have the necessary resources to stay hydrated and effective during emergencies and the summer heat.
4. **Grant and Funding Efforts**
 - **Gas Grant for 2025:** The City has compiled information for a grant request aimed at securing \$600,000 for equipment, line repair, and gas meters, with a 0% match requirement. This grant would significantly enhance the City's infrastructure, ensuring efficient and reliable gas services for residents.
 - **RAISE Grant Eligibility:** Working with the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), the City is exploring eligibility for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for 2025. This grant could provide funding for road improvements and equipment for Public Works with 0% match. Further research is needed to ensure the best match for the grant, but the potential benefits include enhanced infrastructure and improved public services, contributing to the overall development of the City.
 - **Liability Grant:** The City has contacted the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) to determine eligibility for a liability grant. The City is eligible for a \$3,000 grant for specific pre-approved equipment. Over the next few months, staff will work on preparing the grant request. Securing this grant would provide necessary funding for equipment that enhances the safety and efficiency of City operations, demonstrating a proactive approach to risk management.
 - **Congressional Spending Applications:** The City submitted applications for Congressional Spending to Senator Warnock and Senator Ossoff. These applications successfully made it to sub-committees, though the committees for Senator Ossoff ultimately rejected the applications.
 - **Grant/Donation Account Setup:** In collaboration with the finance department, the City has established an electronic transfer account for grants and donations. This setup enhances security by preventing the main city account from being hacked, aligning with the requirements of many grant providers in recent years. By modernizing its financial processes, the City ensures more secure and efficient handling of funds, which is crucial for managing grants and donations effectively.
 - **Grant Writing Workshop:** City staff attended a grant writing workshop to improve their skills and learn about new grant opportunities. This professional development initiative aims to enhance the City's capability to secure funding for various projects. By investing in staff training, the City is better positioned to identify and apply for grants that support its strategic goals and community needs.

5. Environmental and Health Initiatives

- **Landfill Reporting:** The City submitted the quarterly methane and groundwater reports for the landfill to the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Regular reporting is essential for compliance with environmental regulations and for monitoring the impact of the landfill on local ecosystems.
- **Health Services Focus Groups:** The City has partnered with Mercer University to conduct focus groups in July, aimed at assessing health needs and exploring the possibility of bringing health services to the area. This initiative seeks to gather community input and identify gaps in healthcare provision, with the goal of enhancing local health services.

6. Initiatives

- **Water First Program** City staff attended a Water First class to evaluate the City's readiness for the program. Significant improvements have been made since attending the class three years ago, and staff plan to begin the paperwork for review committee submission. The Water First Program provides benefits such as annual Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and a 1% reduction on federal and state loans for approved members. Achieving Water First status would enhance the City's water management practices and provide financial advantages, supporting long-term sustainability.
- **Operation Warm Application:** The City has applied for Operation Warm to secure coats for the winter season for the police and fire department to distribute. This initiative aims to provide warm clothing for residents in need, particularly during the colder months.