

# AGENDA

## Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, August 13, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—July 9, 2024 Regular Meeting
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports
9. Mayor's Report
10. Council Members Questions/Comments
11. Presentation to Council of FY2024 Amended Budget
12. Old Business
  - A. Vote to Approve Multiple Residence Ordinance
  - B. Vote to Approve Street Repair Bids
  - C. Vote to Approve CDBG (Wastewater Lagoons) recommended Bid
13. New Business
14. Public Hearing for Amended FY2024 Budget in City Hall at 10am Thursday, August 29, 2024
15. Called Meeting to Adopt Amended FY2024 Budget in City Hall at 5pm Thursday, September 5, 2024
16. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Thursday, September 5, 2024
17. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, September 10, 2024
18. City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, September 2, 2024 for Labor Day Holiday
19. Citizens' Input
20. Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters
21. Adjournment

**City of Sparta**  
**Mayor & Council Meeting**  
**5 PM Tuesday, August 13, 2024**

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

City Clerk Virginia Webb was present. Attorney John Hitchcock was present. Hitchcock left the meeting at 5:58 pm.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor ProTem 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. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

**Adopt Minutes**

Councilman Nolley motioned to table July 9, 2024 Meeting's Minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. No discussion. Motion passed.

**Clerk's Report**

1. Ordinance Update- Our customer Success Manager, Clover Moon, for Civicplus, stated that the newly submitted ordinances have been received. We are currently set up on an annual print supplement schedule for December and a semi-annual print supplement for June and December. It takes 2 to 4 months for the supplements to be completed, but sometimes longer depending on the amount of workload they currently have at that time. The first supplement for Sparta is in progress.
2. As requested by the City Council, a list of bids for paving/patching of Boland Street and 10 other locations throughout the city was placed on GA Procurement Registry.
3. The pre-disaster Mitigation Plan for 2025 held by Micheal Kimball the Disaster Relief Coordinator, at the Hancock County Courthouse on August 8, 2024 at 10 am. This meeting was attending by Amanda Akins, Utilities Administrator, Chief of Police, Tommie Walker, EMA Director, Mario Chapple, County Commission Board Chairperson, Sistie Hudson and City Clerk, Virginia Webb among other key personnel. Once the plan is complete and presented, the city and county will adopt the plan by resolution.

4. There are loans and grants available through USDA for Single Family Housing. To qualify you must be the homeowner and occupy the home, have a family income within the low-income limits, and unable to obtain affordable credit elsewhere. To apply for the grants, a homeowner must also be 62 years of age or older.
5. We are currently have job openings for Water Distribution, Wastewater Collections, Water Operator Class 1, Public Works and Police Department. You may apply online at [cityofsparta.org](http://cityofsparta.org) or at the utility department entrance.

### **Department Reports – Animal Shelter, Police, Street, and Waste Water**

(See pages 6-14)

### **Mayor's Report**

1. Mayor Haywood acknowledged everything that all the city staff has done in the last couple of months to ensure that the city's services are improving.
2. Ryland bills the city for 512 residential garbage cans, but only 402 are currently being listed on the city's accounts for billing, costing the city almost \$1,400 per month that is not being charged to customers.
3. The city and county will participate in the 90-day Flock Camera Program. Flock cameras are used by law enforcement to aid in criminal investigations and community safety. Flock cameras collect license plate information, including the time, position, and, in some cases, the make and model of the vehicle. This information can be used to identify a suspect or as evidence for a jury. They are employed in surveillance to watch traffic and photograph the backs of all passing cars. They can still capture footage of vehicles with paper license plates or no plates at all. Flock cameras can help neighborhoods save money by deterring crime in the first place. They are also solar-powered, allowing them to operate in areas with no electricity.

### **Council Members Questions/ Comments**

Councilwoman Sherrod asked for clarity on why, although she says she has paid to have her gas turned off, when she receives her bill, there is a gas fee that changes every month.

Attorney Hitchcock explained that there is a gas availability charge. Mayor Haywood and Attorney Hitchcock stated that they will have to investigate this further.

Councilwoman Sherrod introduced Dr. Anton Anthony, the new school superintendent, to Mayor Haywood and the Council.

### **Presentation to Council of FY2024 Amended Budget**

Mayor Haywood provided council with copies of the FY2024 Amended Budget that will be presented to the public during a public hearing at 10am Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> in council

chambers. The budget will also be published as a legal advertisement in the county's legal organ.

Mayor Haywood pointed out that the budget does not require a tax increase this year. The difference in the FY2024 Amended Budget and the FY2024 Budget that was proposed by the Mayor in October 2023 is the assignment of contingency funds to cover inflation and unknown expenses that occurred during the year.

### **Old Business**

**A. Vote to Approve Multiple Residence Ordinance**

Councilman Nolley motioned to approve the Multiple Residence Ordinance; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Council Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

**B. Vote to Approve Street Repairs Bids made by Southern Asphalt.**

Councilman Nolley motioned to approve street repair bids; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

**C. Vote to Approve CDBG (Wastewater Lagoons) recommended low bidder SYNAGRO**

Councilman Roberts motioned to vote to approve the CDBG (Waste Water Lagoons) bid offered by SYNAGRO; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

**Public Hearing for Amended FY2024 Budget in City Hall at 5 pm Thursday, September 5, 2024**

**Called Meeting to Adopt Amended FY2024 Budget in City Hall at 5pm Thursday, September 12, 2024**

**Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30 pm Thursday, September 5, 2024**

**Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5 pm Tuesday September 10, 2024**

**City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, September 2, 2024 for Labor Day Holiday**

### **Citizens' Input**

1. MdaiYah Yisrael, a resident of the city, stated an older woman was stopped by police despite having a valid license, proof of insurance, and registration. However, the officer's

system indicated otherwise. She was still transported to jail, and her vehicle was seized. She paid \$1,500 for her release and presented the same information that she had previously provided to the police. Ms. Yisrael suggested a refund and inquired what the protocol was in such a circumstance.

Mayor Haywood stated Police Chief Walker will have to investigate it.

2. Marion Warren, a county resident, stated that some residents may need assistance in fill out the paperwork required for home repair grants.

Amanda Akins, Utilities Administrator, suggested calling the USDA Sandersville office and they would be more than happy to help filling out the paperwork step by step.

3. Della Smith, a county resident, the city may be missing out on sales tax revenue for gas stations, as most locals buy gas outside of Sparta. She also mentioned that Sparta's gas prices are \$0.46 higher than those in the surrounding communities.
4. DeeDee Hyder, a city resident, inquired about several issues. First, she requested clarification on what information the flock cameras will collect and how they will benefit the community. Next, the status of Comcast in the city and when it will be available to the public, followed by the DOT's status on Hamilton Street.

Mayor Haywood noted that the cameras are mostly used for Amber Alerts and to provide information to law enforcement. Regarding Comcast, Mayor Haywood stated that he has signed Memorandum of Agreement paperwork on behalf of the Sparta-Hancock Development Authority for the Comcast project. In reference to Hamilton Street, it was explained that several potholes on Hamilton Street will be repaired in the coming weeks.

5. Maxine Evans, a resident of the city, expressed how she was glad to see everyone. She commented in reference to Yisrael's issue that the police need to have more compassion and care when elders of the community are concerned. She requested that her natural gas needs to be disconnected.
6. Wilmertine Tolbert, a resident of the city, shared that the cameras work.
7. Paula Dixon, a county citizen, revealed that the Boys and Girls Club had received national and countywide recognition. She emphasized that donations are required and invited everyone to attend and support this communal effort. As of August 2, 2024, 125 students wish to join the Boy & Girls Club.

### **Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters**

Councilman Roberts motioned to go into Executive Session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

### **Back to Regular Meeting**

Councilman Roberts motioned to go back into Regular Meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

Councilman Roberts motioned to hire Demonte Lawrence for employment at the water department; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

Councilman Roberts motioned to hire Anthony Roberts for employment at the water department; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Keveon Turner for employment in the street department; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

### **Adjournment**

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### I. Water Distribution and Sewer Collection Systems

1. **Work Order System**
  - The implementation of a work order system is currently in progress.
  - Since July 1, 2024, 69 work orders have been completed and 73 are currently waiting to be resolved.
  - Staff anticipate the number of work orders completed per month to slow down as staff completed the easiest first to reduce the daunting amount.
2. **Inflow and Infiltration Issues**
  - The ongoing issues related to inflow and infiltration have been escalated on the GEFA Funding Request List.
  - Notification was sent to the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) following challenges exacerbated by Tropical Storm Debby.
3. **Staff Vacancies**
  - New staff members have been hired and are in their probationary period for review.
  - The search for a qualified Lead for Water/Sewer/Gas operations continues, with recruitment efforts ongoing. Interviews are scheduled for Friday, August 16, 2024 and will continue until filled.
4. **GA811 Certification**
  - We are pleased to report that three staff members have successfully obtained GA811 certification, enhancing our ability to manage locate requests internally for water and sewer.
5. **Computer Systems**
  - A critical computer hard drive failure occurred this month. IT was able to successfully back up some of the data and the rest had to be requested from vendors.
  - Staff are looking into the possibility of cloud backups to prevent this from occurring again.
6. **Tools and Equipment**
  - Price quotations for essential tools and equipment are currently being obtained. These will be used to support basic operational functions once finalized.
  - Staff are severely limited on their functionality at the moment due most tools belonging to Mr. Griffin.
7. **Safety Cones**
  - A funding request for \$1,000 worth of safety cones and signs has been submitted to the Department of Public Health (DPH) for August.
  - Additional requests are anticipated following October 2024 for over \$5,000.
8. **GIS System Development**
  - Collaboration with CSRA is underway to scan historical maps and develop a basic Geographic Information System (GIS). This initiative is projected to save over \$40,000.
  - Staff are also looking into a local vendor who does GIS at a reduced price which will give more accurate information the CSRA system (but can use the CSRA as a starting point to reduce the price).

## August 2024 City Council Report

### 9. Lift Stations

- Overgrowth around lift stations has been cleared by Public Works.
- Several lift stations have been stripped for parts. An estimated \$28,000 is required to complete repairs to return them to a functional state (without a secondary backup). An application for Emergency GEFA Funding was submitted on August 9, 2024.
- An emergency generator and pump failure at the Highway 22 lift station was successfully resolved with the assistance of GRWA, resulting in a cost savings of \$1,800 per month. Staff are working on getting a mechanic out to fix the failed generator and get GEFA to repair the HWY 22 lift station.
- Lift station repairs are estimated to cost \$60,000 for parts and \$30,000 for labor to refurbish the lift station. GEFA emergency funding has been applied for on August 9, 2024 to cover this cost.

### 10. Meter Reads

- Meter reads were delayed in July due to staff training and first attempt.
- Additional delays resulted from technical issues, which were resolved through troubleshooting with Harmony Mobile.
- Staff has received comprehensive training on meter reads, courtesy of Harmony Mobile.

### 11. Office and Storage Housekeeping

- Office and storage areas are being cleaned and organized to accurately assess our inventory and ensure operational efficiency.

### 12. Lead and Copper Rule Compliance

- Preparations are underway to ensure compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule, with key milestones set for October 2024.
- Approximately 800 lines still have to be identified prior to October 2024 for submittal to EPD.

### 13. Vehicle Maintenance

- Multiple vehicles, including the Ford F250, Dodge Ram 2500, Ford F150s, and Ford Ranger, are experiencing various mechanical issues.

### 14. Contract Employees

- The department is currently utilizing contract employees Timmy Griffin and Christopher Calloway to manage water and sewer lines until fully certified staff are hired.
- Timmy Griffin is contracted to do the railway project. This will be paid for by the railway.
- Patriot Plumbing is contracted to repair the line at IGA. This will be paid for by MDI.

### 15. Equipment Procurement

- Ongoing pricing efforts for essential tools and equipment continue, pending budget updates for finalization and purchase.

### 16. Old Oxidation Pond/Main Lift Station Maintenance

- Public Works staff successfully removed a broken driveway at the old oxidation pond, ensuring the area remains safe and accessible.



## August 2024 City Council Report

### II. Gas Department

1. **Staff Training**
  - All Water and Sewer staff are now certified to perform locate services for water, sewer, and gas in-house as of August 12, 2024. This will save the City approximately \$85/hour locate from contractors.
  - Training for valves will be held in late September.
2. **Odorizer Fence Repair**
  - The fence surrounding the odorizer was damaged and is scheduled for repair by the local school's maintenance team.
3. **GIS System Development**
  - As with the Water and Sewer Department, the Gas Department is collaborating with CSRA to develop a basic GIS.
4. **Regulator Overgrowth**
  - Public Works staff removed overgrowth around gas regulators to maintain proper operation and accessibility.
5. **Contract Employees**
  - The Gas Department is also relying on contract employees Timmy Griffin and Christopher Calloway until the hiring and certification of full-time staff is completed.
6. **Quarterly Surveys**
  - The department completed the required quarterly surveys for public officials and emergency responders.
  - Additionally, informational letters were sent to both gas and non-gas customers to keep them informed.
7. **Annual Liaison Report**
  - The annual Liaison report for emergency and community officials was given during the Hazard Mitigation meeting on August 9, 2024.
8. **Annual Leak Survey**
  - Harp and Associates is conducting its annual leak survey on the City. It is in its second week and several issues have been noted, which will need to be corrected in the future.
9. **Grant Application Preparation**
  - Data compilation is ongoing in preparation for a 0% match gas grant application to be submitted in the upcoming year.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### III. Water Department

1. **Water Tank Maintenance**
  - o Gates surrounding the water tanks were found unsecured and were promptly locked.
  - o Grass within the water tank fence line, which had grown to person-height, was cut back.
  - o The altitude valve failed, necessitating a temporary bypass solution every few days. Replacement parts arrived on August 12, 2024 and were installed on August 13, 2024.
  - o Wendell successfully repaired a stuck valve vault door.
  - o A valve was damaged during area clearing, resulting in a line break. The issue was resolved within 24 hours by the department and contractors.
2. **Chlorine Tank Repair**
  - o The chlorine tank experienced three significant failures in its pit, intake, and outlet. Repair parts were sourced locally from Ace Hardware.
3. **Water Pump Repair**
  - o A butterfly valve failure has been reported, and the department is currently obtaining repair quotes to address the issue.
4. **Vehicle Allocation**
  - o An F150 is being reassigned from the Wastewater Department to the Water Department for sampling purposes once its 4WD system is repaired.
5. **Training and Personnel Development**
  - o Shane will remain as a contract employee to train Jimmy in Superintendent duties.
  - o Monthly Bac-T sampling training was provided by Timmy to Shane, who will pass this knowledge on to Jimmy.
6. **PC Replacement**
  - o A borrowed PC is currently being used at the Water Plant. Quotes are being obtained for a permanent replacement to ensure ongoing operations.
7. **Planned Improvements**
  - o The department's proposed improvements are under review by the EPD, with bids expected to open in late September.
8. **Asset Management**
  - o Work on Asset Management, aligned with new EPD requirements, is scheduled in collaboration with GRWA.
9. **Emergency Outreach**
  - o The department is evaluating various plans for emergency outreach, with price quotes and comparisons currently under review.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### IV. Wastewater Department

1. **Lagoon Repair / CDBG Project**
  - The lagoon repair project bids closed on August 9, 2024 and the project was awarded to Synagro for a total of \$826,343. A total of 13 engineers visited the facility and 2 bids were received.
2. **Wet Well Maintenance**
  - Routine maintenance was performed on the Wet Well, which was pumped out this month. This should allow staff to pump the ponds down further as flow was reduced by half.
3. **Camera System Damage**
  - A camera was damaged by CCA during operations. The cost of repair and replacement will be deducted from their billing.
4. **Groundwell Proposal**
  - A proposal to decommission and relocate groundwells has been submitted to the EPD for review and approval.
5. **GEFA Funding Request**
  - The department is seeking an additional \$5.4 million in GEFA funding to bring the wastewater facility into compliance with state and federal regulations.
6. **Certification Update**
  - Michael Heath Graham completed his review class and is scheduled to retake the Wastewater III exam to achieve certification.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### V. Public Works Department

1. **Maintenance Training**
  - The Public Works supervisor is providing training to staff on basic equipment repairs, including mowers, chainsaws, pole saws, and tractors, to reduce reliance on external repair services and allow the equipment to stay in better shape.
2. **Wood Chipper Electrical Issues**
  - The department's wood chipper was taken to Murphy on August 7, 2024 to trace and resolve electrical issues affecting its operation.
3. **Vehicle Maintenance**
  - The department's fleet is experiencing various issues, including starter failures and worn tires. Price quotes for necessary repairs are currently being obtained.
4. **Wood Chips Delivery Service**
  - A review is underway to assess the feasibility of offering a wood chips delivery service to the community for a nominal fee. This service would be used to purchase safety gear for the Public Works staff.
5. **General Housekeeping**
  - Grass cutting and maintenance were completed at all departmental locations, including the Water Plant, Wastewater facility, and Animal Shelter.
  - Overgrowth around farm taps on Warthen Highway was cleared.
  - Equipment maintenance, such as blade replacements, was performed.
  - The entire city received comprehensive weed eating and killing services.
6. **Bobcat Tire Replacement**
  - A tire on the Bobcat popped while distributing gravel on Britt Street and replacement tires have been ordered to ensure continued operation.
7. **Storm Control Response**
  - The department responded effectively to downed trees and other debris following Tropical Storm Debby.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### VI. Animal Shelter

#### 1. Animal Care

- o The facility currently houses 14 dogs.
- o One dog, following an attack by another, died while in custody.
- o Another dog was transferred to LOHS.
- o Buddy, a dog under our care, was diagnosed with cancer. A grant application has been submitted to secure funding for his treatment.
- o Both Dixie and Buddy were spayed and neutered through the COFAS program, saving the shelter \$400 in veterinary costs.
- o Operations continued as normal.

#### 2. Donations

- o The shelter received \$400 worth of dog food donations from Tractor Supply and LOHS.

#### 3. Community Engagement

- o The shelter participated in two community events aimed at promoting adoptions and raising awareness of shelter activities.

#### 4. Animal Transfers

- o Contact has been made with nearby shelters and rescues to arrange future animal transfers. Two organizations have added our facility to their contact list for potential transfers.

#### 5. Donations Platform

- o PayPal has been set up to facilitate donations and grant contributions for the shelter.

#### 6. Fan Installation

- o Quotes are being obtained in preparation for a grant application to purchase fans for the shelter.

#### 7. Bed Grant

- o The shelter received a \$600 value grant, which sent new beds for the dogs, improving their comfort and well-being.

## August 2024 City Council Report

### VII. General Departmental Updates

1. **Hazard Mitigation**
  - Supervisors attended a Hazard Mitigation Meeting to discuss future emergency preparedness plans and explore potential grant funding opportunities.
2. **Sparta-Hancock Day Resource Event**
  - The Sparta-Hancock Day Resource event was a success, with supplies distributed to nearly 300 residents, demonstrating the department's commitment to community engagement.
3. **NRWA Conference Participation**
  - Amanda Martin Akins has been invited to speak at the upcoming NRWA conference in September. All expenses will be covered by NRWA, and Amanda will receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs) valued at \$2,000.
4. **GPS and Camera System Repairs**
  - Repairs to the department's GPS and camera systems are currently underway. This process will take time, and further updates will be provided as the work progresses.



CITY OF SPARTA

**POLICE**

Tommie Walker, Jr.  
Chief of Police

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

## AUGUST 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

### SPARTA POLICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

(STATS BELOW ARE FROM THE MONTH OF JULY 2024)

204 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

90 – TOTAL WRITTEN TRAFFIC CITATIONS

- 49 – SPEEDING
- 22 – NO SEATBELT
- 1 – DISORDERLY CONDUCT
- 1 - SHOPLIFTING

18 – STATE WARRANTS ISSUED

9 – ARREST

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH, SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 @ 5:30PM @ SPARTA/HANCOCK LIBRARY

#### PREVIOUS MONTH STATS: JUNE 2024

204 – TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

82 – TOTAL WRITTEN CITATIONS

27 – TRAFFIC VIOLATION WARNINGS

13 - STATE WARRANTS ISSUED

17 – ARREST