

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting 5pm Tuesday, March 11, 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—February 11, 2025 Regular Meeting; Called Meeting
March 27, 2025
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports
9. Mayor's Report
10. Council Members Questions/Comments
11. Old Business
 - A. Council's Approval to Move Forward with Enforcement of City's
Property Maintenance Ordinance to Include Necessary Legal Action
12. New Business
13. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, April 7, 2025
14. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, April 8, 2025
15. Historic Preservation Commission Meeting 5:30pm Thursday, March 13,
2025 in City Hall Council Chambers
16. Citizens' Input
17. Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters .
18. Adjournment

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Meeting
5pm Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Elected officials present were Mayor R. Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem Rav Yisrael, Councilmembers Brandon Nolley and Tom Roberts. Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod arrived at 5:15 pm.

City Clerk Virginia Webb was present. Attorney John Hitchcock arrived at 5:01 pm.

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

Amend Agenda

Councilman Roberts motioned to amend the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Adopt Agenda

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

Adoption of Minutes – February 11, 2025 Regular Meeting; Called Meeting February 27, 2025

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt February 11, 2025 regular meeting minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt February 27, 2025 “called” meeting minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Clerk's Report

1. Accounts Payable Clerk/Benefits Specialist has been hired and in training
2. Documentation necessary to opt out from the Statewide Homestead Exemption (HB581) was submitted to Joy Nichols, Secretary of State office on February 28, 2025. The 3 required meetings were held February 13, at 6 pm, February 20 & 27 @ 10:00 am. A “called” meeting was held February 27, 2025, at 10:30 am and Council voted unanimously to opt of exemption.
3. Met with FEMA representative, Jane Wells, to submit information for City of Sparta projects.
4. Met with planning committee for “It takes a Village” event to be held on April 19, 2025, at the Old Football Stadium located at 12560 Augusta Hwy, Sparta GA. This event will

include free wellness resources, giveaways, a kid's zone including Easter Egg Hunt, and a DJ with music. For more information, Contact Amanda Akins at City Hall 706-444-5753 option 7.

5. A free vision exam and eyeglass clinic has been scheduled for June 12, 2025, by Eyes of Hope & VSP Vision. If you or know someone that may benefit from this service, please have them sign up here at City Hall or contact Amanda Akins or Virginia Webb at 706-444-5753. They will have to prepare for number of people to serve.
6. Completed registration to attend 2025 Elections training being held at OFTC in Dublin GA on April 24, 9am-4pm.
7. Municipal Court will be held March 25, 2025 at 9 am at the Hancock Courthouse

Department Reports

See pages (6-11)

Mayor's Report

1. GA Power will be offering an adjusted lake water withdrawal contract differing from the first proposal.
2. Progressive Steps, a non-profit food distributor, will be returning to the city once a week for 7 weeks during the summer. This will be the third year Progressive Steps has helped our community,
3. At the Spring Gas Authority meeting in Warner Robins, the discussions focused on the positive developments in natural gas availability across the state. There was an emphasis on the increased access to gas and the need for businesses to utilize it, especially in light of the housing demand.
4. In the past, GEFA (Georgia Environmental Financial Authority) funding for natural gas projects was not allowed by state law, especially involving Principal Forgiveness loans. However, new legislation is being considered that could allow GEFA funding for natural gas project expansions, pending the governor's approval.
5. Currently, our gas systems are well maintained, with ongoing free training provided by the Gas Authority's Rodney Dunaway from Thomson, who has dedicated about seven or eight days to this effort. This training is a valuable benefit compared to the previous cost of \$150 per person per month from an external training provider. Overall, these developments aim to enhance workforce skills and improve the efficiency of gas systems in the community.
6. Mayor Haywood announced that he represents the city in voting for the gas authority, which has a total of 201 votes divided among 69 member cities based on gas usage. He is the city's sole voter for the annual board election. The Gas Authority Board makes major all of the Authority's operational decisions. The authority, consisting of nine board members from around the state, meets monthly in Kennesaw. Sparta's previous voting alternate was Timmy Griffin, who is no longer employed by he city. Mayor Haywood appointed City Clerk Virginia Webb as the new alternate to ensure the city is represented.

7. The Shephard's Blood Drive will be held tomorrow from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM. Mayor Haywood encourages community members to participate and donate blood, emphasizing the ongoing need for blood donations in the community and beyond. The bloodmobile will be parked in front of Real Deal Restaurant on Broad Street, and he hopes for a strong turnout to support this important cause.
8. Street Superintendent Donald Ingram has been tasked with obtaining quotes for the necessary repairs to the road leading to the lake intake. The road is currently in poor condition due to significant washouts and rough terrain. With renovations at the nearby sanctuary restricting access, the city crew must revert to the original road, which is nearly a mile long and requires scraping and ditching. Specialized equipment, such as a bulldozer with a seven-angle blade, will be needed to complete the necessary maintenance.
9. For Lafayette Day, the details have been shared with everyone, and the event is scheduled for March 25th. There will be no road closures during the event. The Lafayette Tour entourage will be traveling from Savannah to Augusta to Warrenton and then to our location. The program is set to begin at 9:00 AM, with activities expected to take place around 10:15 to 10:30 AM. Following the program, the group will move to the cemetery, where approximately 12 known Revolutionary War soldiers are buried. Police escorts will be provided for the event, but no roads will need to be closed.
10. Congressional designated spending has been initiated by Senators Warnock and Ossoff, and we have identified two or three funding requests we plan to submit. We need financial support to complete the pocket/pedestrian park and this request will be sent to Senator Ossoff. Amanda Akins is also preparing additional requests, totaling about three different items we will seek funding for this time.
11. Last year, we received approximately \$50,000, which was used to purchase "Jaws of Life" equipment for the fire department. Our current requests need to be submitted within the next week. In addition to Senator Ossoff, we still have the opportunity to approach Congressman Warnock and Congressman Collins for potential funding support on these projects.
12. A check for \$10 will need to be issued to the Sparta-Hancock Development Authority to purchase a small parcel of property for the planned GEFA funded 500,000 gallon water tank in the industrial park.
13. House Bill 137 is expected to pass and will increase projects' bidding threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000. Under the current rules, projects under \$100,000 do not require bidding. With this change, the city council will still approve all projects, and efforts will be made to secure the best prices. It's important to note that this increase in the threshold will allow for more flexibility in future bidding processes.

Council member Questions/Comments

Councilman Roberts addressed the council, noting that there had previously been discussions about holding the work session at 4:30pm and the council meeting at 5:00pm on the same day, the second Tuesday of each month.

Councilman Roberts motioned to hold work sessions and council meetings on the same day; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Old Business

A. Council's Agreement to Move Forward with Enforcement of City's Property Maintenance Ordinance to Include Necessary Legal Action

Council agreed.

New Business

City Attorney John Hitchcock stated that he and City Municipal Court Clerk, Stephanie Hannah, had discussed the proposed change to the court schedule. They reviewed the potential impact of moving court from the last Monday of the month to the last Wednesday, considering factors such as judicial availability and public accessibility. Further discussions will take place to ensure a smooth transition before an ordinance is formally presented to the council for approval.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30 pm Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting at 5:30 pm Thursday, March 13, 2023 in City Hall Council Chambers

Citizen's Input

1. Paula Dixon, a county resident, inquired whether the meetings would continue to be held on the second Tuesday of the month.
The council confirmed that the meetings will remain scheduled for the second Tuesday.
2. Della Smith commended the police chief for his thorough and informative report, emphasizing the importance of transparency in leadership. She stressed the need for financial responsibility in maintaining city infrastructure and supported combining meetings for efficiency, noting that council members should not receive extra compensation for doing so. Smith praised the city's efforts and urged the county to improve its management of its \$15 million budget. She encouraged residents to advocate for better use of taxpayer funds and concluded by recognizing the council's work and the chief's detailed report.

Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters

Councilman Roberts motioned to go into executive session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Back To Regular Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go back into regular session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Bobby Gunter for employment for Natural Gas Department. Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Marquita Johnson for employment as accounts payable/benefits specialist. Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Chrispher Joohenskins for employment on the street crew. Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Street Dept Report

March 11, 2025

- Assisted Water Crew with repairing water main break on Parkway Drive
- Filter Plant fence line was cleared of all overgrowth & old filter plant (which is not in use) was cleared of debris
- Cleared road leading Dixie Water Tower-inside and outside of fence, removed all vegetation intertwined in fence
- Started clearing gas line to Hancock State Prison. Cleared around Farmers taps and cut away all limbs from Cody Johnson Rd. Hauled 9 loads of debris
- Cleared 2 Trees blocking Adams Street that fell from property located across from Murphy's Body Shop
- Assisted with traffic flow for Black History Parade & 5k Run
- Installed some of the banners for Black History month
- Performed maintenance on all mowers, weed eaters, edgers and mini excavators
- Opened drains on Ledbetter Street to allow for stormwater to drain off roadway

Street Department

Two Trees across from Adams St.



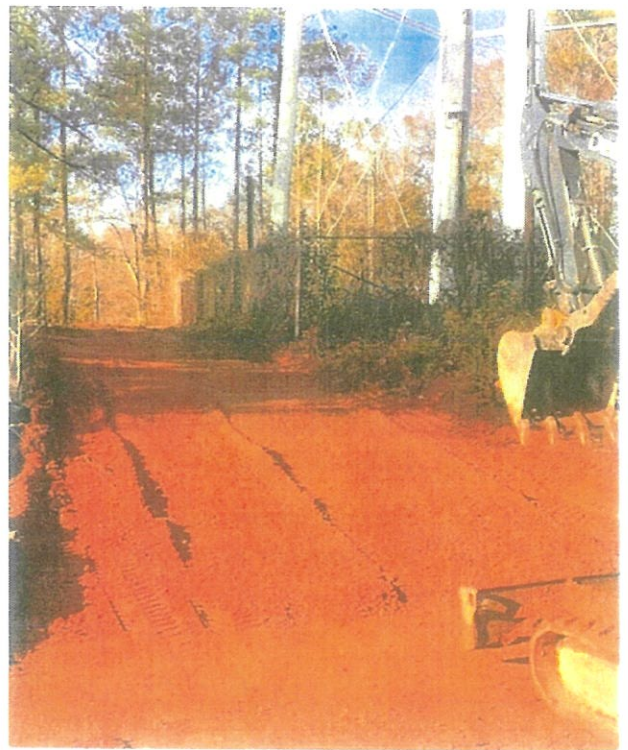
Filter Plant



Filter Plant



Water Tower



City of Sparta – March 11, 2025 Council Meeting Report

Water Treatment Plant Report

- The Sparta Water Treatment Plant withdrew 30.2 million gallons from the lake and supplied 31.2 million gallons to the distribution system.
- EPD conducted its triennial Sanitary Survey inspection in February 2025, identifying several minor violations. Staff has already addressed some of these issues and is actively working to resolve the remaining ones. A formal response to EPD is due within 45 days.
- Due to turbidity meter malfunctions, manual logging was required every 15 minutes by operators. An Electrical Engineer successfully restored three out of four meters, with one still pending replacement. The new meter will require an upgrade from analog to digital wiring, which staff is currently working to implement.
- Show and Reed completed on-site calibration and repairs for the five water meters within the facility, eliminating the need for off-site servicing as done in the past.
- ME Sack repaired a pre-soda ash pipe leak that had developed in the system.
- Staff met with GIRMA to assess roof damage sustained during Hurricane Helene.
- The City of Sparta received a donation of two Chlorine Emergency Kit A's from another municipality, valued at approximately \$6,000.
- The clearwell inspection was completed, and staff is currently awaiting results.
- The Tin Man water storage tank was taken out of service on March 11, 2025, for a full interior cleaning.
- The Public Works Department continued efforts to clear overgrown vegetation from the property.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Report

- The facility achieved a 93% removal rate for BOD and a 98% removal rate for TSS.
- Staff cleaned aerators, and no significant operational changes were reported.
- An increase in trespassing incidents has been observed on the property over the past month.
- A temporary power pole is being installed in preparation for the CDBG Lagoon improvement project, which is set to begin in April.
- The Ford Ranger was out of service for several weeks due to a broken shifter and cable. The part was backordered, leaving the vehicle inoperable during that period.

City of Sparta – March 11, 2025 Council Meeting Report

Animal Shelter Report

- Daily operations continued, including kennel cleaning, medication record-keeping, daily enrichment activities (walking and playtime), and administering vaccinations, dental care, and medical treatments.
- The shelter received a \$58,000 insurance check from GIRMA for repairs to fencing and roofs damaged during Hurricane Helene.
- As of March 1, 2025, the shelter has been in operation for two years, and the license was renewed for a third year.
- Up to five dogs are scheduled for euthanasia in March due to behavioral issues, lack of adoption interest, and the unavailability of rescue placements. Efforts to find homes for them have been unsuccessful and the dogs have been at the shelter for nearly 1.5 years.
- Staff is working with a nearby rescue to rehome 10 puppies currently in the community.
- The shelter received a \$1,500 donation of Odoban cleaning products.

Water Distribution & Sewer Collection Report

- Removed an abandoned ¾" galvanized line from the system after it began leaking.
- Repaired a ¾" galvanized line on Old Augusta Highway. Due to gas lines being wrapped around the water lines, a full replacement is not currently feasible. However, the line will be updated when gas lines in the area are replaced.
- A 6" concrete asbestos water line on Parkway Drive ruptured, requiring the replacement of 32 feet of piping. This line, which has broken three times in the past year, is included in the GEFA project for full replacement.
- A contractor struck an 8" cast iron main under the Tin Man water tank, necessitating repairs.
- A 2.5" cast iron main was repaired at Hamilton and Bell Avenue.
- A 2" water line was repaired on Middle High Drive.
- Several ¾" service line repairs were completed throughout February and March 2025.

Miscellaneous Updates

- FEMA has approved the purchase of turnout gear for the fire department, which was previously delayed due to regulation changes.
- The city continues to work with FEMA and GIRMA to secure funding for Hurricane Helene-related damages. GIRMA conducted additional inspections in February, and FEMA is scheduled to begin assessments in March. This process is expected to take several months.

City of Sparta – March 11, 2025 Council Meeting Report

- The city submitted an application for Congressional Spending through Senator Ossoff's office to fund the Pocket Park Project on Broad Street.
- City Hall front office staff received training on the Harmony MDM system to improve operational efficiency. Field staff will undergo training next month.
- The city applied for a GMA grant to obtain Thermal Imaging Cameras for the Fire Department.
- Staff is actively collaborating with EMI on GEFA grant applications, assessing necessary infrastructure replacements for future projects.
- Planning for the 2025 Community Resource Expo is underway. So far, 30 vendors, multiple mobile units, and an Easter egg hunt have been confirmed. The event has secured over \$13,000 in sponsorships.

