

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Regular Meeting
5PM Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Elected officials present were Mayor R. Allen Haywood, ProTem Rav Yisrael, Council members Brandon Nolley, Tom Roberts, and Sandra Sherrod arrived late at 5:08 pm.

City Clerk Virigina Webb was present. City Attnory John Hitchcock was present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm 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 approve the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion approved.

Adoption of Minutes – December 10, 2024, Regular Meeting; December 30, 2024 Called Meeting for Liquor Licenses' Approval

Councilman Nolley motioned to approve December 10th minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Council Nolley motioned to approve December 30th minutes; Council Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Clerk's Report

1. Kenneth Harper, a 33½-year-old employee of the City of Sparta's Water Filter Plant, retired from the role in 2025. He was hired in 1991 and later became the plant's interim manager. The City of Sparta expressed gratitude for his service and wishes him well in retirement.
2. Property taxes of \$179,596.80 were collected, but \$247,668.95 was billed, leaving a balance of \$68,072.15 outstanding. Interest and penalties will accumulate until collected.
3. The Municipal Court in January has been canceled due to Judge Linggold's resignation, necessitating the appointment of a new judge, with the court date for February to be determined.
4. Council approved two liquor license applications for 2025 retail liquor sales, Lil' Round up Package Store and Sugars' Package Store, on December 30, 2024.
5. W2s and 1099s will be processed and mailed out by January 25, 2025, and we kindly request that you ensure your addresses are correct before sending them out.
6. City Hall will be closed on Friday, January 10, 2025, due to an ice storm. Late fees are typically added on the 10th of the month, but a grace period was granted on January 14, 2025, to accommodate account holders and address numerous calls related to the storm

Departmental Reports

See pages ()

Mayors Report

1. The Shepherd's Blood mobile unit, based in Augusta, visits Real Deal twice a month but has little attendance. The Mayor should prioritize community participation and inclusion in future agendas. They are present from 2:00pm until 5:30pm.
2. The Mayor announced a \$30,000 ARPA commitment for utility assistance in 2021, but expressed concern regarding the distribution of extra funds to Hancock County residents. He underlined the importance of a vetting process to assure true need. The Mayor plans to address eligibility screening issues in the upcoming Overview meeting, addressing frustrations from residents and addressing fairness concerns about application slots and ensuring funds are directed to true need.
3. The city is preparing to apply for FY 2025 LMIG funds, expecting \$26,168.60. We have saved \$60,000 over two years for paving projects and have discretionary funds for potholes. The LMIG funds will supplement these efforts, requiring a 10% match.
4. The city received \$458,000.00 in ARPA funds for COVID-19 recovery and infrastructure improvement. Most of the funds were used for personnel compensation and operational enhancements. \$16.69 can be transferred to the General Fund. The remaining funds were used for material purchases and emergency repairs. To cover costs and keep the system in working order, the speaker claims that buying sleeves for broken pipes was their "crutch" and recommends raising water and sewer usage.
5. Beverly Hill, along with others, helped create banners during last year's Black History Month, honoring Hancock County African Americans and polls, raising funds for the event and planning more this year.
6. Georgia Power is set to implement a new withdrawal contract for 10 years, requiring agreement or risk of losing water supply. The cost of storage has increased from \$20,990 in 2022 to \$21,850.18, highlighting the ongoing issue of managing water and sewer expenses.
7. Kenneth Harper, the city's longest-serving employee, will receive a plaque and nameplate to honor his 33 years of service at the Water facility.

Council Members Questions /Comments

There were no questions and comments at this time.

New Business

- A. Approval of Sewer Lift Station Emergency GEFA Funding Request
Councilman Roberts motioned to approve of sewer lift Station Emergency GEFA Funding Request; Councilman Nolley seconded. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, February 3, 2025

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, February 11, 2025

City Hall Will Be Closed Monday January 20, 2025 in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday

Citizens' Input

1. Lilly Tripp, a city resident, reported that a pothole near a house has been covered over and sunk, resulting in excessive traffic. The crush and run has been applied several times, and the road needs paving. The pothole has caused severe damage to vehicles, and the road requires permanent repair. A car hit the pothole in December, and a no-through-traffic sign is needed to prevent further damage to the road. Funding or concrete can assist to make the road smoother.
Mayor Haywood announced \$80,000 for pothole repairs by Southern Asphalt, with DOT conducting proper patching. Decision on timing depends on weather, potentially delayed until February. The plan is to restore road quality.
2. Della Smith, a resident of the county, shared that there is a water leak on Hamilton street. Mayor Haywood said that it was on the list but also Amanda would take a look at it.
3. Kathy, the library manager, expressed gratitude to the community for their support, highlighting that the library was fully staffed and offered free Wi-Fi and laptops. She announced plans to expand Wi-Fi availability to ensure 24/7 access and shared details about upcoming computer classes by Inspired EDU, which would include free laptops for participants. Kathy emphasized the importance of providing financial literacy and healthcare navigation programs and discussed ongoing efforts for summer programs and partnerships. She presented gifts to attendees as a token of appreciation and reiterated her commitment to enhancing children's resources in the library before her retirement, fostering a love for learning and reading among kids.

Executive Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go into executive session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Vote 3-1. Motion passed.

Back to Regular Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to go back to Regular Session; Council Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote. Vote 3-1. Motion passed.

Jacqueline Warren, Account Payable Specialist, will be resigning Friday, January 24, 2025.

Councilman Roberts motioned to hire Calvin Johnson for employment at the police department; Councilman Nolley seconded. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting 5pm Tuesday, January 14, 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—December 10, 2024 Regular Meeting; December 30, 2024 Called Meeting for Liquor Licenses' Approval
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports
9. Mayor's Report
10. Council Members Questions/Comments
11. Old Business
12. New Business
 - A. Approval of Sewer Lift Station Emergency GEFA Funding Request
13. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, February 3, 2025
14. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, February 11, 2025
15. City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, January 20, 2025 in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
16. Citizens' Input
17. Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters
18. Adjournment