

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, April 14, 2026

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—Re-visit and Adopt tabled February 10, 2026 Regular Meeting's Minutes; March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting's Minutes; April 2, 2026 "Called Meeting" Minutes for "First Reading" of Ordinance to Regulate Livestock in the City
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports to Include Two Presentations
9. Mayor's Report
10. Council Members Questions/Comments
11. Old Business
 - A. "Second Reading" and Vote to Adopt Ordinance to Regulate Livestock in the City
12. New Business
 - A. Approve Resolution for Mayor as Voting Delegate & Virginia Webb as Alternate for Annual Gas Authority Membership Meeting
13. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Tuesday, May 12, 2026
14. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, May 12, 2026
15. Historic Preservation Commission 5:30pm Thursday, May 14, 2026 in City Hall
16. Citizens' Input
17. Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters
18. Adjournment

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Meeting
5PM Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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

Councilwoman Sherrod left at 6:15 pm.

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

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

Adopt Agenda

Councilman Johnson motioned to adopt the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote (which is counted as a "yes" vote). No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Adoption of Minutes – Revisit and Adopt tabled February 10, 2026 Regular Meeting's Minutes; March 10, 2026 Regular Meetings Minutes; and, April 2, 2026 "Called Meeting" Minutes for First Reading of Ordinance to Regulate Livestock in the City

Councilman Johnson motioned to adopt February 10, 2026 minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote (which is counted as a "yes" vote). No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Councilman Johnson motioned to adopt March 10, 2026 minutes; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote (which is counted as a "yes" vote). No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Councilman Johnson motioned to adopt; April 2, 2026 "Called Meeting" Minutes for First Reading of Ordinance to Regulate Livestock in the City; Councilman Nolley seconded. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to vote (which is counted as a "yes" vote). No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Clerk's Report

1. Sparta is considering a tax sale to collect more than \$52,000 in delinquent property taxes for 2025. The sale has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 3, 2026. City officials attended a property tax conference held by Delinquent Tax Services of Loganville,

Georgia, to better understand the process, which consists of more than 15 steps. The city will collaborate with an expert firm to facilitate the tax sale. As of this date, \$215,950.25 in 2025 property taxes have been collected, which accounts for approximately 80% of the total taxes owed/billed. Property tax funding is critical to sustaining the police and administrative services. In February 2026, delinquent notices were mailed to property owners as a reminder. The City will prepare 30-day notifications of intent to issue FiFas in the next weeks.

2. Utilities Administrator Amanda Akins, Gas Superintendent Bobby Gunter, Gas Employee Courtney Johnson, and City Clerk Virginia Webb attended the yearly Pipeline Safety Seminar in Macon on Monday, April 6, 2026. To maintain safety, the Public Service Commission requires training for all employees who work on the City of Sparta's natural gas infrastructure. Attending the 4-hour training program fulfills the requirements of the Drug & Alcohol Awareness Coordinator and the designated employer representative.
3. The city is planning a City Cleanup Day. A date has not yet been established, but a meeting will be held on the 20th to finalize details. Once confirmed, the event will be advertised on the City's website and Facebook page. Volunteers are welcome to participate. A special thanks goes to Marsha Letson of Covey Rise Farm for contributing 18 azaleas to be planted around the front exterior of City Hall. After the City Hall's exterior painting project is completed, the city will remove the existing shrubbery and replace it with the donated azaleas.
4. The Boys & Girls Club's summer camp will run from Monday, June 1, 2026 until Friday, July 17, 2026. The cost is \$60 per participant, which includes registration, meals and field trips. The camp will be held at 12560 Augusta Highway in the Phase Two building adjacent to the skating rink. For more information, please call 478-457-6244.
5. The City of Sparta is looking for temporary workers under a WorkSource Development grant to help address storm drain damage caused by Hurricane Helene. Applicants must have been unemployed for at least 12 weeks, possess a valid driver's license and show proof of residence. The city also has internship possibilities for people aged 17 to 24 who are not currently enrolled in school. Interested parties can scan the QR code on the flyer in the City Hall foyer or pick up an application from the Water/Gas Department.
6. Municipal Court will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 9:00 AM in the county courthouse's courtroom. For information regarding citations (fines), please contact the Police Department at 706-444-5777.

Departmental Reports to Include Two Presentations

See pages

Justin Hipps, business consultant with the Gas Authority, presented an overview of natural gas operations and pricing to the Mayor Council and citizens in attendance. He explained that natural gas is delivered from producers in Texas and Louisiana by pipeline to the Sparta pipe gate, where the Gas Authority manages supply, while the City handles local infrastructure maintenance.

He reviewed the January–February cold weather event, stating that record-breaking and prolonged freezing temperatures increased demand and reduced supply due to frozen production sites and pipelines. He noted that although prices rose significantly statewide, the City of Sparta did not experience service interruptions.

Mr. Hipps explained that utility bills are made up of three parts: federally regulated transportation costs, a city rate for operations and infrastructure, and a commodity cost that fluctuates with the market. He emphasized that the commodity portion is the only variable component and is outside local control.

Council members raised concerns about price spikes, the lack of consumer caps, and whether fixed-rate options would still reflect market changes. Mr. Hipps explained that fixed rates do not track market fluctuations in the same way and are generally higher and more stable year-round.

He also responded to concerns about high residential bills, explaining that increased usage during the cold period contributed to higher costs. He reiterated that natural gas is generally cheaper than electricity over time and that the Gas Authority operates as a nonprofit, passing commodity costs onto member cities without markup.

Mr. Hipps further explained that pricing is influenced by national and global markets, including NYMEX and Henry Hub, and that the Authority uses first-of-month pricing to provide stability. He noted that while extreme events like the recent winter are rare, they can significantly impact prices, and the organization is working to prepare for future conditions within the limits of market control.

Mayor's Report

1. April is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month and noted that the city signed a proclamation in observance of the month. Regina Butts of Family Connection/CIS was recognized for coordinating the event, which had a good turnout. The city holds the observance annually.
2. The Sheriff's Department will host a Prescription Drug Take-Back event on Saturday, April 25, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Sheriff's Department. Residents were encouraged to turn in unused medications during the event.
3. A Narcan training workshop, "It Takes a Village to Save Lives," is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Registration information will be available through the "It Takes a Village" event.
4. The City is updating its Comprehensive Five-Year Plan in partnership with County Government, which is required by the state to remain eligible for grants and other assistance programs. The current plan, which was adopted in 2021, will expire on Tuesday, June 30, 2026. Several meetings have already been held as part of the planning process. These include a planning meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, a stakeholder meeting on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, a public meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2026,

and another stakeholder meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. A final public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 4:00 PM at the courthouse. Community feedback has been gathered regarding the City's strengths, weaknesses, needs, and priorities, and this information will be included in the updated plan. The CSRA Regional Commission is assisting the city with the development of the joint city-county plan, and residents are encouraged to attend the final public hearing.

5. Mayor Haywood informed the public that he attended a Hi-Lo Trail (Athens to Savannah) planning meeting on March 4, 2026, in Sandersville. He stated that the trail has been completed from Athens to Union Point. He also informed the public that the next phase of the project will extend through Hancock County into Washington County near Hamburg State Park. He explained that the planned route will come from Greene County, pass behind the schools, cross Highway 15 and continue behind the library.
6. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee whose report will be presented at the GMA convention in June. Mayor Haywood serves on the committee and has been actively involved in its work. He noted that the committee is made up of approximately 15 members from various communities.
7. The annual "Art in SpARTa" event will be held at the CJE site (Connie and Josie Williams' facility, just past Devereux on Highway 22) on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at 11:00 AM. He encouraged everyone to attend and noted it is a well-supported and enjoyable community event.
8. Senator Jon Ossoff has appointed him to serve on a Rural Ambassadors Committee focused on gathering input regarding the needs of rural communities. He stated that the first Zoom meeting was held the previous day and that he looks forward to participating in the committee's work.

Council Members Questions/ Comments

Councilwoman Sherrod stated that she had not received any further communication from the City of Sparta regarding what plans, if any, would be made to assist Officer Thompsons and his family in response to his condition, and she expressed concern about community support efforts. She verbally attempted to scold Mayor Haywood for not addressing Officer Thompsons in his Mayor's report. Haywood pointed out that during Chief Walker's police report he had just provided an update on Officer Thompsons' health.

Mayor Haywood stated that he has personally been in communication with Officer Thompsons' family regarding his condition throughout his illness.

Councilwoman Sherrod disregarded Mayor Haywood's response and continued her personal out-of-order verbal scolding of Haywood. Quickly, Mayor ProTem Roberts took control of the meeting and stated that the matter could be discussed more deeply at a better or more appropriate time. Councilwoman Sherrod refused to be orderly then left the meeting and did not return.

Old Business

A. “Second Reading” and Vote to Adopt Ordinance to Regulate Livestock in the City”

City Attorney John Hitchcock stated that a proposed ordinance would regulate livestock within the city limits. He explained that the ordinance would set zoning requirements and minimum lot sizes for keeping animals such as chickens, ducks, horses, cattle, goats, sheep and bees.

He noted that the ordinance includes limits on the number of animals per acre, shelter requirements and other standards intended to reduce nuisances such as odor and noise. He stated that pigs would be prohibited within the City, and that exotic animals such as kangaroos or zebras would require City Council approval.

He explained that the intent of the ordinance is to ensure appropriate regulation of livestock in residential areas for public health, safety and neighborhood compatibility.

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the ordinance to regulate livestock in the city
Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

New Business

A. Approve Resolution for Mayor as Voting Delegate & Virginia Webb as Alternate for Annual Gas Authority Membership Meeting

Councilman Johnson motioned to approve; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Historic Preservation Commission 5:30pm Thursday, May 14, 2026 in City Hall

Citizens’ Input

1. Karen West, a resident of the city, announced that the Farmers Market will reopen on Friday, April 24, 2026, and continue through November. She stated that the opening day will feature an art show with seven local artists, additional produce vendors, and expanded participation from local artisans and creators.
She also noted that the market includes a mini-interactive museum, the Susie Curry Memorial Little Free Library and an art gallery. The market will operate from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

2. Wilmertine Tolbert, a resident of the city, asked for clarification regarding the number of City employees previously discussed, confirming that the total included both full-time and part-time employees.

Ms. Tolbert also asked about the upcoming City cleanup day, specifically whether the event would involve only City workers or if citizens would also be asked to volunteer. It was clarified that volunteers from the community would be encouraged to participate.

3. Jamie Baggett, a resident of the city, addressed the Council and asked for confirmation regarding plans for a new water tower to be constructed at the old Sparta High School location alongside Highway 16 East.

Mayor Haywood confirmed that the current plan is for a new water tower to be constructed at the old school location. He stated that the project is likely still at least two years away and noted that the Board of Education has agreed to sell the City approximately one acre of property for the water tower site.

4. Dip Polatty, a resident of the city, reminded everyone that May is recognized as Historic Preservation Month, which is sponsored through state and national historic preservation organizations.

Executive Session Personnel & Legal Matters

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

Back to Regular Session

Council Johnson motioned to return to regular session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Micheal Hoover for employment; Councilman Johnson seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Councilman Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05PM.