

TOWN OF TALLULAH FALLS  
STATE OF GEORGIA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
July 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.  
MINUTES

The meeting for July 11, 2019 of the City Council of Tallulah Falls, Georgia was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Mayor Teri Dobbs.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Teri Dobbs  
Councilperson Larry Hamilton  
Councilperson Mary Beth Hughes  
Councilperson Carol Nelms  
Town Clerk Linda Lapeyrouse  
Town Attorney Warren Tillery

ABSENT: Councilperson Deb Goatcher  
Police Chief Tonya Elrod  
Fire Chief Mike Early

SPECIAL GUESTS: EMS, Ins. Representatives Mike Sams and Scott Porter

OTHERS PRESENT: See attached sign-in list

Mayor Dobbs welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Councilperson Deb Goatcher was not feeling well and did not attend the meeting.

Reverend Turpen gave the invocation.

Mayor Dobbs requested to add an Immediate Moratorium on Short-Term Rentals in Residential Zoning Districts. **A motion was made by Councilperson Nelms to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.**

**A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to approve the minutes of the June 13 Work Session and Council Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms. Councilperson Hamilton abstained since he was not in attendance at the meeting. Councilperson Hughes and Nelms voted to approve the minutes.**

#### REPORTS:

**Attorney Report** – None.

**Engineering Report** – Mayor Dobbs reported that Pond had been hired as the general services engineer. Their team visited Tallulah Falls to begin assessing the building rehabilitation projects.

**Water Report** - Attached hereto and made a part hereof. EMS, Inc. representative Mike Sams reported on the existing condition of the system as well as the water outage on Hickory Nut Mountain. He shared pictures of the system and provided details on issues that need to be addressed including, but not limited

to, black mold and leaks in the Vandiver pump house, missing junction box cover, foliage covering the storage tank, chemical tank issues, exposed wires in the Hickory Nut booster station, the communication power switch was turned off and a door was left open, The VFD is not lightening friendly and is a very expensive control panel. There is no surge protection and no way to monitor tank levels without climbing tank. There has been irregular flushing, and there is severe rust in the 10,000 gallon water tank. This 10,000 gallon water tank is in critical condition. Emergency funding is being pursued and contact has been made with EPD and Jay Matthews at Georgia Rural Water Association. Mayor Dobbs thanked Scott Porter and Mike Sams for their professionalism in responding to the Hickory Nut emergency and commended Scott for hauling 50 cases of bottled water to city hall and unloading it by himself.

**Public Safety Report** – Attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Police Chief Elrod was unable to be at the meeting due to attending a funeral of a fellow officer. The bunk room has been cleaned out in preparation of turning it into the police department including room for adding GCIC and evidence storage. Water records and office will be moved to the police office. Councilperson Hughes reported that a review of city owned buildings has been done. If the buildings are cleaned out and we get rid of things we don't need, we will have adequate space. The small shed on the hill could be moved behind city hall to be used by the fire department. The large metal building could also be used by the fire department for meetings, an exercise room, storage, etc.

The kayaks in the back of City Hall are owned by the Tallulah Falls School. A resident requested space for his kayak too. Attorney Tillery said that kayaks should be locked and a formal agreement/safeguards in place, but there was probably a way to do it if authorized by the Council.

The F-150 lettering is being removed and should be back soon. The Town logo will be put on each door.

Councilperson Hughes reported that Gary Verdino is in town and available to assist with rescues.

Street Report- Councilperson Nelms reported that Pond had looked at the sink hole on Hickory Nut Mountain and looked at the dock area. Signage is needed. Council identified signs from a sample provided by Town Clerk Lapeyrouse. Councilperson Nelms made a motion to install signs at the dock and on Tallulah Falls Railroad Street. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.

Residents Dan Hayes and Robert Keeler both commented that the dock should not be open to the public. It was suggested that dialog be started with the state park to not send visitors over to that dock for use. Councilperson Hughes stated she would contact the Park Ranger to remove it from their advertising materials.

Town Clerk Lapeyrouse further reported that LMIG applications are now open and projects need to be identified. Tallulah Falls has been allocated \$14,966.28 with a local match requirement of 30%.

DDA Report- Councilperson Hughes reported that the DDA has signed an agreement with Bill Turk for an exploratory look at the Tallulah Center. He has been meeting with different stake holders. Looking at the Tallulah Center and the Ranger House for best uses.

Town Clerk/Financial Report – Attached hereto and made a part hereof. Town Clerk Lapeyrouse suggested posting the whole agenda packet on the web site prior to the meetings so that interested citizens can access the information including department reports, financials, and items to be considered by the Council. **A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to authorize the Clerk to post the agenda packet to the Town’s website. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.**

**Comprehensive Plan** – Update on July 9<sup>th</sup> Town Hall meeting was given. Approximately 30 people were in attendance. Future meetings include Rabun Gap, Sky Valley and a county-wide meeting at the civic center on July 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Founder’s Day** – October 5<sup>th</sup>. Contact has been made with Tallulah Falls School, Georgia Power and Dan Hayes.

**Mayor Report-** Mayor Dobbs stated that it concerns her that people think there are “secret meetings” being held. There are no major decisions made until brought to the council in a public meeting.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Attorney Tillery stated that since Councilperson Hamilton abstained on the approval of the minutes, Mayor Dobbs would need to vote. Mayor Dobbs postponed her vote until she has finished reviewing the minutes.

The building permit requested by Michael Gill was discussed. Initially, a letter was sent from the city asking the person to get a permit. The permit application was provided and paid under protest with a threat to sue. The setbacks have been verified. The use is no longer a question pursuant to correspondence from Gill’s attorney. The last one is ownership. He can certify ownership or get authorization by the owner. Attorney Tillery recommended that the permit be approved subject to Certification of Ownership or Authorization from the owner within 30 days. If the permit is denied after 30 days, refund permit fee and start enforcement action. The motion as stated by the attorney was made by Councilperson Nelms, seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.

A sign permit requested by Hillbillies Takeout was reviewed. Councilperson Hughes stated that she knew that the signs on the utility poles were not allowed and would be removed. **A motion to approve the permit as requested was made by Councilperson Hamilton. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms. Councilperson Hughes recused herself. The motion was approved by Councilperson Nelms, Hamilton and Mayor Dobbs.**

EMS, Inc. requested approved of \$2,000 for a portable hydrant meter purchase to assist with calculating water used when flushing. **A motion was made to approve the \$2,000 purchase by Councilperson Hamilton. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.**

The budget amendment for the 2018/19 FY was presented by Town Clerk Lapeyrouse. **A motion was made by Councilperson Nelms to approve the budget amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.**

The possibility of an immediate moratorium on short-term rentals in residential districts was discussed. Lodging on the Lake is in a business zoning district and is not at issue. Attorney Tillery can look into it,

but an immediate moratorium cannot be done without adhering to zoning guidelines. **A motion was made by Councilperson Nelms to have Warren Tillery's firm research putting an ordinance in place to put restrictions on short-terms rentals in residential districts. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mayor Dobbs thanked the Town's consultant, Willard Ferguson, for his work on the water system over the last three years.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**A motion to go into Executive Session to discuss potential litigation with the Attorney was made by Councilperson Hughes. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved at 9:50 p.m.**

The meeting was re-opened at 10:52 p.m. No action items came out of the Executive Session.

**The motion to approve the minutes was approved by Councilperson Nelms, Councilperson Hughes and Mayor Dobbs. Councilperson Hamilton abstained.**

**A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:53 p.m.



Teri Dobbs, Mayor



Linda Lapeyrouse, Clerk