

**TOWN OF TALLULAH FALLS
STATE OF GEORGIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
September 5, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

The meeting for September 5, 2019 of the City Council of Tallulah Falls, Georgia was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Teri Dobbs.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Teri Dobbs
Councilperson Deb Goatcher
Councilperson Larry Hamilton
Councilperson Mary Beth Hughes
Town Clerk Linda Lapeyrouse
Police Chief Tonya Elrod
Fire Chief Mike Early

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Town Attorney Warren Tillery
Councilperson Carol Nelms

OTHERS PRESENT: See attached sign-in list

Mayor Dobbs welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the invocation.

Mayor Dobbs requested to add an Executive Session to discuss SDS litigation and GMRC Grant Assistance Request under New Business. **A motion was made by Councilperson Goatcher to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.**

A motion was made by Councilperson Hamilton to approve the minutes of the August 8 Work Session and Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.

Councilperson Nelms was unable to initially attend the meeting due to a conflict with work. She did appear via teleconference for a portion of the meeting and was able to join the meeting in person prior to the meeting's conclusion.

REPORTS:

Attorney Report – At the last meeting, there was Moratorium put into place by the Council for licensing, permitting, regulation and fees associated with Short-Term Rentals in R-1, R-2, A and PUD zoning districts for 180 days. This is only a temporary moratorium. He is hoping to have the draft regulations ready to review at the October meeting.

SDS Mediation will begin on September 19, 2019. Tallulah Falls is not a required participant.

Zoning Map Amendments initiated by the Town will be advertised 15 to 45 days prior to a public hearing to review the amendments. Council can consider the zoning map amendments once the public hearing has been held.

The right-of-way application by Uniti was incomplete. Attorney Tillery has responded back to them by letter and e-mail. The Town must take action within 60 days of a completed application. They are on notice that the application was incomplete.

Attorney Tillery was asked at the last meeting if the Town could charge a franchise fee for a cell tower. Since the tower is not on the right-of-way, we would not be able to charge a fee.

The draft camping ordinance was changed around to allow camping within certain zoning districts with the property owner's permission as long as there is no compensation. We can limit the timeframe to a certain number of days and a certain number of times per year. Once that has been determined, we will advertise the ordinance again for 15 to 45 days and hold a public hearing. A draft will be prepared for the Planning & Zoning Commission to review at their next meeting.

(Carol Nelms joined the meeting by teleconference)

Engineering Report – None.

Water Report - Attached hereto and made a part hereof. There was a water outage on Hickory Nut Mountain this weekend. A homeowner on Tallulah View had a leak which affected Hickory Nut Mountain customers. The emergency contact number for water is Scott Porter (770) 519-8098. This number is also on the front door of City Hall.

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

The new police Tahoe is here for people to look at, but it still needs to be striped. The old truck is at Police Chief Elrod's home. She will be taking the decals off. Mayor Dobbs thanked her for taking her own time to do this. Mayor Dobbs also thanked the Fire Department for cleaning out the culvert on Hickory Nut Mountain.

Street Report- Councilperson Nelms reported that the signs are helping at the dock. The engineer is working on recommendations for the LMIG application.

Town Clerk/Financial Report – Attached hereto and made a part hereof. Town Clerk Lapeyrouse also reported on the upcoming election.

Comprehensive Plan – The Council, DDA and Planning & Zoning Commission are jointly working on the Future Land Use Map. The next joint work session is planned for September 16, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

DDA Report- Chairman Keith Nelms reported that the DDA meeting time had shifted due to a conflict and all members were not able to attend. The consultant is working with the small business development center of the University of Georgia. The Next meeting will be Tuesday, September 17, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Report- Mayor Dobbs stated she would hold her report to the end of the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No action was taken on the camping ordinance as was earlier presented by Attorney Tillery.

NEW BUSINESS:

Town Clerk Lapeyrouse presented the Tax Digest and Five-Year History of Tax Levy as well as the millage rate roll-back sheets for Rabun and Habersham Counties. There were no reassessments of property values for 2019 by either county. The roll-back rate will remain the same as last year at 5.868. There was no recommendation for a millage rate increase. **Councilperson Hughes made a motion to approve the recommended millage rate of 5.868. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.**

Town Clerk Lapeyrouse presented a Resolution to approve using the State's Purchasing Card (P-Card) program. Mayor Dobbs, Mayor Pro tem Goatcher and Town Clerk Lapeyrouse will be listed as the designees on the account to make application and authorize the use of the purchasing cards. Authorized users will currently be the Clerk, Police Chief and Mayor. The Council or other authorized employees can be added in the future if needed. There is no sharing of cards. Detailed transaction information will be available at any time. This will eliminate the need for the current Town credit card issued in Mayor Dobbs' name. **A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to authorize the Purchasing Cards as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.**

Chief Elrod is working on getting the GCIC set up for running criminal histories for pre-employment. This must be in a secure setting. The bunk room is being remodeled to house the police chief, GCIC and evidence. Part-time employees will be paid for using the revenue generated by running the criminal histories.

The F-150 multi-use vehicle has been re-stripped thanks to Chief Elrod. Mayor Dobbs recommended that the Police Chief be responsible for maintenance, costs and usage of the vehicle. If anyone needs use of the vehicle, they would coordinate with Chief Elrod to get the key. **Councilperson Hamilton made a motion to have Police Chief Elrod responsible for the multi-use vehicle and to have all costs associated with the vehicle charged to the police department's budget. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.**

For the Recreational/Park project in the Habersham SPLOST VI, it had been discussed in a recent meeting the desire of the residents to have a place to house their kayaks and canoes when not in use. A metal three-sided building with racks was presented for Council's consideration. A small annual fee would be collected from anyone using the shed to help recoup the expense over time. A show of hands of the audience attendees was taken to see how much interest there was from the community. A large majority of the attendees supported the idea. Dan Hayes suggested using the Parks/Rec funds at the Rock House. Any project at the Rock House would have to be for a park/recreational use. Since the use of that building has not yet been established, it would be difficult to determine a project. **A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to approve up to \$7,500 to install a metal building with racks suitable for storing kayaks and canoes in the back of the City Hall property. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.** The Tallulah Falls School will still be allowed to park their kayak trailer in the back of the City Hall property. The priority use of the building would be for residents and property owners.

(Councilperson Nelms joined the meeting in person)

A proposal to purchase an audio system for the meeting room as a Habersham SPLOST VI Public Facilities City Hall renovation project not to exceed \$1,500 was presented. This is a basic system and does not include video conferencing. **A motion to approve the project expenditure as presented was**

made by Councilperson Hughes. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved. Mayor Dobbs stated that we would try to have the system in place for the October meeting.

A proposal to donate a Dragon Eye laser with a fair market value of \$2,050 was presented. The purchase of this equipment is included in the budget. **A motion was made by Councilperson Goatcher to approve the purchase and donation as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.**

A proposal to sponsor the Tallulah Falls Twin Rivers Cycling Event in the amount of \$250 was presented. This is included in the Town's annual budget. The Town uses a portion of the Hotel/Motel Tax that is collected and deposited to the General Fund.

Mayor's Comments

Founders Day was started a few years ago by former Mayor Dan Hayes to recognize the founding of our town. It has typically been held the first Saturday in October. Unfortunately, due to a lack of volunteerism, we are going to cancel the event this year. In the past, the proceeds went to the Volunteer Fire Department. The Fire Department is unable to participate with their BBQ and the Car Show was unable to attend. Should we bring it back next year, we would need more volunteerism and it would be better if it did not compete with the Foxfire Mountaineer Festival.

The Town owns the Tallulah Center on Hwy 441 and the Rock House on Main Street. The Town's architect/engineer has provided an estimate for rehabbing the buildings in the amount of \$446,977. We are looking at possible grants \$446,977.

Mayor Dobbs asked for an update on the upcoming election. Town Clerk Lapeyrouse reported that all other cities within the county have changed their polling place to the Civic Center. According to Tammy Whitmire, Election Superintendent, we would save some money this year in having someone haul the equipment back and forth, but no specific amount was provided. Tammy Whitmire also indicated that the time in canvassing the votes would be lessened by having it all done there. Although there would be a small savings this year, it would be more important next year when the regulations change regarding the voting equipment. Right now, you vote here for city elections and then go to the county for all county and state voting. Many people vote early at the county election office anyway. A show of hands was taken from the audience to see if people were in favor of moving the polling location this year. No one was opposed. People that are unable to physically go to the County to vote can vote absentee. We would need to run an ad for two weeks notifying the public of the proposed change. **A motion to advertise the proposed change of polling location to the Rabun County Civic Center beginning this year was made by Councilperson Hughes. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.**

Mayor Dobbs then discussed possible dates for the election debate. A possible date of October 10th at 7:00 p.m. was discussed by the candidates in attendance. Town Clerk Lapeyrouse will check with Mike Early and Joey Fountain to see if the 10th will work for them. Mayor Dobbs asked the public if they wanted a different format/moderator. Audience members suggested direct questions from the floor. She asked that if anyone has suggestions to get them to Linda.

SDS Mediation is scheduled for September 19, 2019. The only two issues we have are the water map to include the Hickory Nut Mountain subdivision and the large tract of land at the end of River Street. The

water authority did not see a problem. We also want to memorialize the agreement we currently have for funding for the Fire Department.

Mayor Dobbs went over the possible funding for the emergency water repairs to repay some of our CDs that we are having to cash in. This will be done with the help of a Immediate Threat and Danger Grant of \$50,000 and closing out of some of our SPLOST projects and moving that money to the Water project. A copy of the funding schedule is attached hereto and incorporated herein.

The Georgia Mountain Regional Commission has proposed preparing the Immediate Threat and Danger Grant for the Town for \$1,000 and up to \$2,500 for grant administration. **A motion was made to approve the GMRC proposal by Councilperson Hughes. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Dan Hayes asked what happened to cause the tank to drain and for us to have to connect to the Demorest system. It was narrowed down to a problem at the park and a closed valve. The system has now been secured.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to go into executive session for the purpose of possible litigation. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved.

The meeting was re-opened at 9:28 p.m. No action items came out of the Executive Session.

Keith Nelms raised a concern about the proposed camping ordinance and the ability of people who buy property in Tallulah Falls for camping purposes. Attorney Tillery stated that could be fixed by allowing it when ancillary to a permanent structure suitable for living.

The upcoming Planning & Zoning meeting will include a review of the proposed camping ordinance.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.



Teri Dobbs, Mayor



Linda Lapeyrouse, Clerk