

**TOWN OF TALLULAH FALLS
STATE OF GEORGIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
October 3, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

The meeting for October 3, 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

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Town Attorney Warren Tillery
Councilperson Carol Nelms

OTHERS PRESENT: See attached sign-in list

Mayor Dobbs welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councilperson Goatcher gave the invocation.

A motion was made by Councilperson Goatcher to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to approve the minutes of the September 5 Joint Work Session, Regular Meeting, Executive Session and September 16 Joint Work Session. 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.

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Mayor Dobbs welcomes special guests Darrin Johnston, the Windstream Team, Phil Sutton Habersham County Administrator, Captain Les Hendricks Habersham County Sheriff's Department and Habersham County Commission Chairman Stacy Hall.

Darrin Johnston introduced himself. He is running for District 5 Habersham County Commission for a one-year unexpired term.

Michael Foor from Windstream introduced Hope Crawford and the Windstream team. Mr. Foor recommended businesses to meet with Hope to customize their business services. David Hart asked what speed could be obtained at the Tallulah Center? Windstream responded that it has 25-50 mg now, but they could get any speed they needed. Mr. Foor also announced that there is no cost to upgrade to 25 mg if available at the service location.

Commission Chair Stacy Hall explained the Habersham County Jail Needs Assessment. He then turned it over to Captain Les Hendricks for the new jail presentation. The existing jail was not built for expansion. The new 314 bed jail would be expandable to 504 beds. The estimated cost is \$31,628,143. County Administrator Phil Sutton wrapped up the presentation. The Jail will be on the election ballot for the voters to decide. Additional information can be found on the Habersham County website.

REPORTS:

Attorney Report – SDS Mediation was held September 19-20, 2019. The main disputes between some of the other governments have not been resolved, but Tallulah Falls believes it has worked out its issues including memorializing the annual financial assistance for the Fire Department and the Water Service Distribution Map.

Engineering Report – None.

Water Report – Mike Sams from Environmental Services, Inc. presented the water report. They have removed the interior of the sand filter and investigated the problems. They also met with the Town and Laurin Yoder regarding the possibility of grants. Security of the water system is a priority. There have been several unexplained security concerns since they took over the system including communications systems being turned off, valves being closed causing disruption of service, suspicious vehicles and locks being removed from tanks and equipment. These incidents have been turned over to the Sheriff's office for further investigation. Additional security measures are now in place. EMS, Inc. is looking at getting estimates on cleaning the 55,000-gallon water tank.

A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to move the water related agenda items to this portion of the meeting so EMS, Inc. can participate. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.

Three bids for roofing of the city well house and the 55,000-gallon tank building were reviewed. The bid from Rabun County Roofing in the amount of \$2,656 was the lowest responsible bid. EMS, Inc. agreed with the roofing recommendation by Rabun County Roofing which is designed for commercial use.

A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to award the bid to Rabun County Roofing in the amount of \$2,656. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hamilton and unanimously approved.

The Gorge View well is a well that was abandoned due to being unable to produce. Mike Sams recommended permanently abandoning the well and obtaining bids to close it. He is concerned that it is still connected to the system. The well should be closed pursuant to state standards.

A motion was made by Councilperson Hamilton to authorize EMS, Inc. to get estimates on the permanent closure and abandonment of the Gorge View Well. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.

Mike Sams reported that R.E. McLean Tank Company has a 20,000-gallon tank that has been refurbished. The tank would be \$22,900, a substantial savings over a new tank. Mike reported that engineer Brian Rindt, RMA, agrees. This purchase would be part of the emergency funding that has already be approved by Council. There is a new location adjacent to the pump house. This will be a horizontal tank instead of vertical. This location will also allow for a shorter communication cable.

A motion to approve the purchase of the 20,000-gallon refurbished tank from R.E. McLean Tank Company in the amount of \$22,900 was made by Councilperson Hamilton. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.

Councilperson Nelms joined the meeting in person at 8:07 p.m.

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

Chief Elrod reported that GCIC conducts an audit every 3-5 years. An audit was conducted September 25, 2019. We have not been in compliance with GCIC and did not follow through on correcting the issues from the last audit. Chief Elrod has been working on addressing all of these issues in order to meet compliance. Some files were unable to be located and others were misfiled. Security of the information was a big issue. Chief Elrod advised the auditor of the new office where everything would be kept and secured.

The fall fun festivals are upcoming for Habersham and Rabun Counties. Chief Elrod is purchasing candy and hoping to create a fun display for the events.

Councilperson Hughes reported that Fire Chief Early was out of town visiting family. There were 17 calls for service during the month of September. There were no requests from the Fire Department.

Street Report- Town Clerk Lapeyrouse reported that the LMIG grant application is ready for submittal. This will include repair of the sink hole, drainage and patching on Hickory Nut Mountain Road. Dan Hayes suggested that the road be re-stripped on School Road and Moss Street. The public was asked if there were other roads to be considered, to get in touch with Town Clerk Lapeyrouse.

Town Clerk/Financial Report – Attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Comprehensive Plan – The Council, DDA and Planning & Zoning Commission are jointly working on the Future Land Use Map. Councilperson Hughes has heard from property owners and residents in the area and expressed her concerns about including waterfront development classification on the Future Land Use Map along River Street and the entire left side of the lake.

A motion was made by Councilperson Hughes to remove waterfront development from the left (west) side of the lake. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Nelms and unanimously approved. (Note** Councilperson Hamilton stated after the meeting that he did not understand Councilperson Hughes' motion and was not in favor of the motion as stated and wanted the minutes to reflect his opposition to same.)**

DDA Report- Councilperson Hughes reported that the DDA finalized their By-Law Amendments and approved a new checking account. Bill Turk brought in Patrick Fulbright from the Small Business Development Center of UGA to meet with the DDA. The next meeting will be the third Tuesday of October at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Report- Mayor Dobbs reported that the GMA magazine did a feature City Spotlight article on Tallulah Falls hiring its first female police chief. Mayor Dobbs further reported that the artwork of Keith Nelms has been chosen to hang in the executive offices of the State Capital. She also thanked Reverend Turpen for the donation of apples given to the Town in appreciation of the prayers for him and his wife. She invited the meeting attendees to take apples with them.

Mayor Dobbs spoke on the passing of Tim Lee and remembered him as a visionary. Tim was the Executive Director of Economic Development in Habersham County. His service will be held this Saturday. Please lift his family in prayer.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Attorney Tillery reported that the general election polling location will remain in Town Hall for this election on November 5th. There is not enough time before this election, and there is a requirement that no viable place be available before moving the election out of the precinct.

Councilperson Hughes read a written statement withdrawing her candidacy for Council in the upcoming election. She stated that the past 21-months on Council have been extremely stressful, and she has come to realize she is not the best candidate for the position. She is also a recent empty nester and hoping to move toward semi-retirement. Hughes stated she is choosing a life with less obligations and stress. She apologized for not following through with her original commitment but feels like this is the best decision for herself and the Town. Councilperson Hughes stated that she would like to continue on the DDA and the Tallulah Falls Business Association.

Mayor Dobbs stated that Councilperson Hughes will remain on Council until the new Council members are sworn in at the January meeting. She also stated that since there are two remaining council candidates for two vacant council seats in the election, they will automatically fill those seats. Mayor Dobbs thanked Councilperson Hughes for her tremendous service. Councilperson Goatcher also thanked Hughes.

Councilperson Goatcher stated that she intends to resign at the end of the year. She has served on this Council cycle for 2 years and has served on the Council for a total of 16 years. She stated that she values her time off and wants to enjoy retirement. She had hoped to leave her seat earlier this year so that the seat could be filled by an elected official, but the way the Charter was amended states that the Council would appoint in case of a vacancy. She wanted everyone to know before the election so that everyone knows she is not leaving her seat as a result of the election.

Mayor Dobbs commended Councilpersons Goatcher and Hughes as being two great women, council women and citizens.

Attorney Tillery reported that the Unifi Right-of-Way application was incomplete. He talked to the lawyer and not asking to put in any new infrastructure just to manage what's there. Anything new would require plans and specifications. Attorney Tillery asked for authorization to send a letter conditional to operate and manage existing Windstream infrastructure.

A motion to authorize the letter as stated was made by Councilperson Goatcher. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Hughes and unanimously approved.

No action was taken on the camping ordinance as it is still under review by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Dobbs read the Arbor Day Proclamation for October 3, 2019. This is a part of our requirements under the Tree City USA. **Councilperson Hughes made a motion to approve the Proclamation. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:


Dan Hayes thanked Councilpersons Hughes and Goatcher for their service.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.



Teri Dobbs, Mayor



Linda Lapeyrouse, Clerk