

CITY OF DAHLONEGA

WORK SESSION MINUTES JULY 21, 2011

The Dahlonega City Council met at City Hall on Thursday, July 21, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. Members present were Ralph Prescott, Gerald Lord, Johnny Ariemma and Terry Peters. Michael Clemons and Sam Norton were not present. Also present was City Manager Bill Lewis and City Attorney Doug Parks. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MT. HOPE CEMETERY PROJECT:

City Manager Bill Lewis informed Council that Faith Jones from GRMC has submitted a proposal for the purpose of conducting an inventory of existing and unmarked burials in Mt. Hope Cemetery. Mr. Lewis requested Ms. Jones give a presentation of what would be involved for the project. Ms. Jones informed Council that currently there were no maps or records for the twelve (12) acre cemetery due to a fire at City Hall. She explained the first step of the project would be the inventory process of visible markers. A digital photograph of each headstone is taken to be tied back to the GPS location. She also stated this can be tied back into the existing software that City Planning Director Chris Head is now using. At this time, City Manager Bill Lewis explained to Council some background issues with the Cemetery. He informed since there were no records, the City stopped selling lots due to problems determining who actually owned them because not all owners had their deeds recorded. Ms. Jones advised Council to speak with the Historic Commission about getting involved to research recorded deeds to help with the project. She informed the second step of the project would be Archaeological Testing for unmarked graves. This process would include probing the ground for a surface analysis to determine if someone is buried in that space. The grave would then be marked with a pin flag for the GPS system to add them to the map. Ms. Jones informed the end products will be detailed mapping, inventory database, headstone photos and a DVD containing all data created for the project. Councilman Lord questioned if a grid system could be created and generate lot numbers in order to make it easier to locate a certain grave. Ms. Jones stated a grid system would be easy to implement with the GPS system. Also the cemetery map could be put on the City website for families to research. She informed Council the cost for this project was \$1,780 per acre. With the cemetery being twelve (12) acres, the total cost would be \$21,360.00. Mayor McCullough requested to have DDA Director Joel Cordle research to see if there were any grants that could possibly be used for this project. City Manager Bill Lewis stated the cemetery needed a lot of work and staff will be bringing information before Council to discuss those needs.

SAFETY AND WELLNESS POLICY:

City Clerk Lou Stewart informed Council that an application had been submitted for a safety grant through GMA Safety and Liability Management Grant Program. The City was notified the application had been received and two additional items were needed to complete the grant

process. She explained that due to some of the safety equipment that the City had listed to be paid for by this grant, GMA requested the City add a mandatory use policy that pertained specifically to that equipment. City Manager Bill Lewis informed Council this in no way meant the City did not have these policies in place, but instead they were being implemented in another policy area to meet requirements of the safety grant. City Clerk Lou Stewart informed the addition of Section 1.501 – Safety and Wellness Road Safety Equipment policy would need to be adopted by City Council. Council was in agreement to add the policy additions to the August agenda for adoption.

REVIEW OF 2011-12 BUDGET:

City Finance Director Christopher Austin informed Council the tax millage rate must be approved by August 1st. Mr. Austin recommended using the rollup rate of 4.212, which is not a tax increase. He explained property values have decreased therefore; property tax revenue will decrease by \$47,621.00 if the rollup rate is not adopted. Councilman Peters asked what was the City's percentage of tax collection. Mr. Austin informed we should continue to receive in the upper 90% range. He stated with the Tax Commissioner being very successful in collecting prior years, he anticipates 94.5% revenue collection. City Manager Bill Lewis asked Council if all dates that were set for Budget Work Sessions would work with everyone's schedule. It was the consensus of the members present, no scheduled dates would need to be changed.

Work Session was adjourned at 5:03.