

CITY OF DAHLONEGA

WORK SESSION MINUTES

The Dahlonega City Council held a Work Session on Thursday, July 18, 2013 at City Hall. Members present were Sam Norton, Terry Peters, Ralph Prescott and Johnny Ariemma. Bruce Hoffman and Gerald Lord were not present. Also present was City Manager Ron Thomas. City Attorney Doug Parks was not present. Mayor Gary McCullough called the Work Session to order at 4:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF YARD DEBRIS:

Public Works Director Ricky Stewart informed Council there was an issue concerning the excessive volume of yard debris being left at the curb for the City to dispose of by contractors or hired labor. He further informed by distributing photo's of debris that had been left at one resident that took two employees working half a day to clean it up. Mr. Stewart requested clarification from Council on how this should be handled and asked that the existing ordinance be amended to address this type of issue. Councilman Ariemma questioned how much was weather related. Mr. Stewart informed he did not feel that any of the recent large quantities was weather related. Councilman Prescott informed that he had seen a commercial contractor cutting a tree down and then saw City personnel chipping up all the debris. Mr. Stewart informed that you don't always know if it is a contractor or home owner who has taken down the tree, the issue comes back to the volume. City Manager Ron Thomas informed that the City needs to set a minimum length and diameter of debris that can be picked up and anything over that, the City should charge an hourly rate for staff. After further discussion, Mayor McCullough requested that Councilman Prescott form a committee with Ricky Stewart and Skipper Bryant to determine an amendment to the ordinance to cover this issue. Councilman Prescott asked Council to please email him their thoughts and concerns for discussion with the committee. Mayor McCullough informed once the committee had recommendations to bring them back before Council for approval.

DISCUSSION OF REGULATIONS WITH THE SALE OF OUTDOOR MERCHANDISE:

Mr. Colby Strom informed Council that he had researched and determined that outdoor sales was a problem in a lot of areas. He further informed that in researching other city ordinances that different criteria had been added to cover issues such as how many items could be placed outside and all items must match items for sale in the store. Mr. Strom informed Council that since he had removed his store items, his sales had been affected because tourist was not walking down to his shop. He also distributed photos and discussed how the areas could be redone to make the outdoor displays more appealing. After further discussion, Mayor McCullough requested that Chris Head, Tim Martin, Johnny Ariemma, Ralph Prescott and Terry Peters form a committee to meet with Mr. Strom to discuss a solution for business owners. He further requested that Planning Director Chris Head set a meeting date and notify Committee members and Mr. Strom.

DISCUSSION OF APPOINTED ELECTION OFFICIALS FOR NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION:

City Clerk Lou Stewart informed Council that the State mandates that the governing authority appoint an Election Superintendent, Assistant Election Superintendent and Absentee Ballot Clerk for the General Election. Mayor McCullough asked who would be appointed to work the twenty-one day prior advance voting. Ms. Stewart informed that the Poll Manager will be Frankie Caldwell and the two Assistant Poll Managers will be Karen Redimarker and Lois Thomas with Doris Sutton as an alternate. These are also the same managers that will work on Election Day. Ms. Stewart further informed she was requesting that these appointments be added to the August agenda for approval. It was the consensus of the Mayor and Council to add this item to the August 5, 2013 Council meeting agenda.

DISCUSSION OF FORMAT FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:

Mayor Gary McCullough informed Council the discussion for this item will be postponed until all Council members can be present.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE QUARTERLY REPORT PRESENTATION:

Ms. Amy Booker, Chamber President distributed the Chamber of Commerce 2nd quarterly report to all Council members. Ms. Booker also informed Council that the Chamber was found in compliance with their Bed Tax Audit for 2012. The Chamber is also re-arranging their display center to include a large area for retail merchandising and are receiving proposals for updating the restrooms. The Chamber will again this year continue the tradition of the Dahlenega Welcomes U for the UNG students, with the addition this year of faculty and staff. They will be given goody bags, event guides, maps and passport cards when they check-in. Councilman Norton informed that he had received positive feedback from the businesses concerning this event.

Mr. Jay Markwalter, Tourism Director gave a slide presentation showing Council the thirty (30) second commercial about Dahlenega and informed there was a 25% increase on website when the commercial was running. They have also invested in on-line banners and are seeing people clicking on them for information. They are still stocking all informational racks with brochures and have a contract with three hundred twenty-nine (329) hotels to stock Dahlenega brochures. Mr. Markwalter further informed the Chamber also uses other ways to promote Dahlenega such as the Hospitality Highway, Wine Events, Hiking Trails and Pineapple PR which has eighteen (18) writers for magazines. Mr. Markwalter also informed that the bed tax collection for the second quarter had increased fifteen (15) percent in the City overall and eleven (11) percent with the City and County totals combined.

The Work Session was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.