

**CITY OF DAHLONEGA  
CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
JUNE 6, 2011**

The Dahlonega City Council met in regular session on June 6, 2011. Members present were Ralph Prescott, Gerald Lord, Michael Clemons, Terry Peters, Sam Norton and Johnny Ariemma. Also present was City Manager Bill Lewis and City Attorney Doug Parks. Mayor McCullough called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Prayer was led by Ralph Prescott and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Michael Clemons.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:**

Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made by Gerald Lord to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Sam Norton. Mayor McCullough asked for all in favor raise your hand, all opposed, motion approved by all members present.

At this time, Mayor McCullough asked Councilman Lord to introduce the new Commander of Camp Frank D. Merrill. Councilman Lord informed that Lt. Colonel Robert O'Brien better known as Bob will take command Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. for a two year assignment. Lt. Col. O'Brien graduated from the Military Academy in 1992 and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry. His first assignment was with the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Borne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He then attended the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Ft. Benning and then came to North Georgia where he served as the Assistant PMS for two and half years. While at North Georgia two things happened, he became a North Georgia Alumni by earning a Master's Degree in Public Administration, and met his wife Michelle. After North Georgia he was deployed to Kosovo and served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Germany. He then attended the Commander and General Staff College of Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas and then was assigned to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Air Borne Division at Ft. Bragg, then deployed to Afghanistan. After returning from Afghanistan, he served at the National Training Center of Ft. Erwin, California then returned to Afghanistan as an advisor to the Afghanistan National Guard. He is leaving an assignment at Ft. Bragg as the Deputy Commander of the First Brigade Combat Team in order to move to Georgia to become the Commander of the Ranger Camp. His wife Michelle went to school in Dacula, Georgia and graduated from North Georgia in 2000 with two degrees, one in Chemistry and one in Biology. She is now working on two Master Degrees, one in Business Administration and one in Marketing. With Lt. Colonel O'Brien being deployed, Michelle has volunteered a lot of her time with all the organizations on Post. She has just received the Presidential Service Award for serving over 4,000 volunteer hours in the last five years. Lt. Col. O'Brien and his wife will live at Porter Village with their nine year old daughter, Taylor and their eight year old son, Bob. Councilman Lord welcomed them back to Dahlonega and stated we look forward to a great relationship being built between the Ranger Camp and the City.

**MINUTE APPROVAL:**

Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 2, 2011. A motion was made by Ralph Prescott to approve the minutes of May 2nd as distributed, seconded by Terry Peters. Mayor McCullough asked for any corrections or additions, hearing none he asked for all in favor say aye, motion approved by all members present.

Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 9, 2011. A motion was made by Michael Clemons to accept the minutes, seconded by Sam Norton. Mayor McCullough asked for any corrections or additions, hearing none he asked for all in favor say aye, motion approved by the following vote: Ralph Prescott, Gerald Lord, Michael Clemons, Terry Peters and Sam Norton. Johnny Ariemma abstained.

Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2011. A motion was made by Gerald Lord to accept the minutes, seconded by Ralph Prescott. Mayor McCullough asked for any corrections or additions, hearing none he asked for all in favor say aye, motion approved by all members present.

#### **CITIZENS:**

Mayor McCullough asked Mr. Craig Taylor with Beneficial Communities, Inc. to come forward to make his presentation to the Council. Mr. Taylor informed Council he was the Executive Director of a non-profit corporation called Cooperative Resource. He stated the apartments under this name are the Golden Hills Apartments on Wimpy Mill Road. These apartments were built in 1992 and have been an affordable property for residence of Dahlonega and Lumpkin County. This means however, that the property is nineteen years old and is somewhat obsolete. It is not up to standards with ADA requirements, does not have energy efficient appliances and needs a thorough upgrade. Due to rent restrictions these types of upgrades cannot be done with conventional financing. There is a program in Georgia called the Low Income Tax Credit. It is a tax credit against federal tax liability and also state income tax liability that is awarded through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for developers. With this type of funding it is possible to do a higher quality apartment and still keep affordable rent. There will be a redevelopment of the existing forty-four units, community center and in addition they will be buying the adjacent 3.32 acres which is zoned PUB and building 25 more townhouses on this property. This will be a total project of 69 units. In order to make application for this type of funding from DCA they need local notification and City Council support in the form of a letter signed by the Mayor. At this time, Mayor McCullough informed Council that Mr. Taylor's letter appeared to have a statement that would indicate a public hearing was needed. Mr. Taylor responded that a public hearing was not necessary. In this case the hearing needed was with the residence of Golden Hills Apartments. If it was a new construction, with no residence then a public hearing would be necessary for the community as a whole. After further discussion, a motion was made by Michael Clemons to approve the issuance of a letter of approval, seconded by Terry Peters. The Mayor asked for all in favor raise your hand, motion approved by all members present.

Mayor McCullough asked Nicole Alvarez with NOA to make her presentation for the approval of a Special Event Alcohol License. Ms. Alvarez informed Council NOA started the Chili Cook - Off Event in 2006 and the event has steadily grown. The event is held annually at Hancock Park on the last Saturday in October. This event is one of their largest fund raisers and all the proceeds are used for NOA victims and also important to their annual budget. Ms. Alvarez requested approval to add alcohol (beer only) to the event this year, hoping to make it more appealing to vendor sponsors and outside individuals attending the event. After further discussion, Councilman Clemons made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Ariemma. Mayor McCullough asked for any questions or comments. Councilman Peters reminded that Council had been very specific in the past of the condition, that the individual checking ID's must be an adult. Ms. Alvarez confirmed staff or board members will be checking ID's and enforcing the two (2) drink limit per person. After further discussion, Mayor McCullough asked for all in favor to raise their hand, motion approved by all members present.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Mayor McCullough asked if Council had any questions concerning any of the departmental reports. At this time, Councilman Ariemma asked City Manager Bill Lewis if we are still going to be within budget in the General Fund, due to 60% being spent, with six (6) months of the budget left. Mr. Lewis informed Council that when several of the large onetime costs are due, such as insurance premiums it skews your budget all at once. He further informed that expenditures should even out for the remainder of the budget year. Councilman Ariemma also questioned the Water Treatment budget. Mr. Lewis reminded Council the Water and Sewer Fund for 2011 had a budget deficit and no anticipated monies to be transferred for Capital Improvement. This is an issue to watch carefully as it is critical to maintain a Capital budget in a water and sewer utility. Remaining Bond funds from the 2007 Revenue Bonds were transferred to the Capital fund for use in the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades. Without some additional revenues there will be no capital money available for other expansions or significant repairs. Mr. Lewis informed we are hoping for more connection fees which will help however, our water revenue and sewer revenue sales are in line and with the hot dry weather we are anticipating more revenue from water sales. There has also been a 5% increase in landfill disposal cost that was not anticipated however, Mr. Lewis informed Council that he feels comfortable with the 2011 year budget as anticipated.

## **CITY MANAGER:**

City Manager Bill Lewis requested approval of the low bid for the East Main Sidewalk project. He stated that three bids were submitted which were Glosson Enterprises at \$109,400.00, Wimpy Concrete at \$117,706.00 and Grizzle Grading at 121,400.00, with staff recommendation for approval of Glosson Enterprises at \$109,400.00. He informed Council that staff had estimated approximately \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 dollars for this project. The City was to contribute approximately \$31,000.00 and the City was to receive private business donations, which did not happen. In addition, extra costs were added to the project by DOT that the City had no control over. Mr. Lewis further informed Council one of the deciding factors and one of the things that makes the project more viable is the intersection improvements at Wal-Mart. This being because, DOT will be upgrading all signalization, making a left turn signal, pedestrian crosswalk and curb islands that can be landscaped for a more attractive entrance into the community. Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to approve staff recommendation of the low bid from Glossom Enterprises at \$109,400.00. Councilman Lord made a motion to approve the recommendation, seconded by Ralph Prescott. At this time, Mayor McCullough asked for discussion. Councilman Clemons informed Council he was strongly against this project because the agreement was to spend approximately \$50,000.00 not \$109,400.00. He feels this is a luxury the City does not need and has not had any citizen response in favor of this project. Councilman Ariemma stated the cost for this project was too high, as the original projected cost was \$31,000.00. He suggested using the money instead for guard rails to be installed in certain areas to improve safety. Councilman Peters asked what was the time frame of this project. City Engineer Ricky Stewart informed Council that DOT are replacing all City traffic signals. This signal was taken off their rotation and when we inform them we are starting our project, they will start their process. He further informed Council the original estimate of \$50,000.00 was using City labor and the bid of \$109,400.00 is for a turnkey project. This was due to other projects that must be done at this time. Councilman Peters asked where staff was concerning the funds that was set aside for road improvements out of fund balance. Mr. Stewart informed the \$100,000.00 that was set aside for road resurfacing, can be included in the July submittal to DOT. At the same time, we can let them

know the City has an additional \$100,000.00, so they could add to their project list when we request our roads however; this would not take place until next year. A second option is, while DOT contractors are here this year the City could request for them to pave beyond their contract. This would mean they would have to work around their schedule with DOT and we would contract directly with them. The third option is to bid the roads out completely separate. Mr. Lewis informed Council that the prep work for these roads must be an in house cost and the City Road Department has already started the patching and repairing on these roads. He feels the best option is to try to negotiate with the contractor when they are here this year and have the roads ready for them to resurface. The roads that are on the list to be paved this summer that are under LARP funding are Hyalite Road West in Sky Country, Ash Avenue between Park and Chestatee Street, Arcadia between Park and Chestatee, and Church Street between Main and Hawkins. After further discussion, Mayor McCullough asked for all in favor of the motion to approve the low bid to Glossom Enterprises for \$109,400.00 to raise your hand. Voting for the motion: Ralph Prescott, Gerald Lord, Terry Peters and Sam Norton. Voting against the motion: Michael Clemons and Johnny Ariemma. Motion carried.

City Manager Bill Lewis asked City Engineer Ricky Stewart to report on the update of the Traffic Signal Contract. Mr. Stewart informed Council he had contacted DOT to ask who did their traffic signal maintenance and was told it was done in house. He again inquired if they would consider maintaining the traffic signal at Sunset, and was again told they would not. He informed he had received a list from DOT of thirteen (13) approved contractors. Within these thirteen (13) there are five (5) within a reasonable response distance of a two hour radius. Of these five (5) that was contacted, one was out of business and one only does installation therefore, only three (3) were left and a bid package has been sent to each. He stated he had given them two (2) weeks to respond, with a bid opening date of June 17<sup>th</sup>.

City Manager Bill Lewis informed Council the next request was from Lumpkin County concerning the partnership of the GIS Fly-over update for photographic purposes. Mr. Lewis further informed Council included in their packet was a list of advantages given by Lumpkin County Staff. Also Lumpkin County Staff members Larry Reiter GIS Manager and Alan Sargent Chief Appraiser were available to answer any questions. Mr. Lewis stated three years ago, this was a joint project between Lumpkin County, City of Dahlonega, NGCSU and L. C. Board of Education. This year the Board of Education has elected not to participate due to budget issues. At this time, Councilman Ariemma questioned why this project was on a three (3) year window. Mr. Sargent informed the law requires aerial photos to be updated every three (3) years to keep up with changes. He stated since 2009 significant changes had been made. This is also important for 911 emergency locates also. This system also saves on expenditures for the assessors department in fuel cost and man hours. Councilman Peters asked the estimated cost for the City. County staff stated the cost being split between three entities, each would pay \$4,795.56 annually for three (3) years. Councilman Clemons questioned if City staff would use this system enough for the cost to be justified. Mr. Lewis informed Council the County would receive more direct benefits from the fly-over system than the City however, the upgrades to the 911 system will be a significant impact to the citizens of Lumpkin County in which we are all a part. After further discussion, Mayor McCullough asked for a motion to pay 1/3 of the cost. A motion was made by Michael Clemons to accept, seconded by Sam Norton. Mayor McCullough asked for any further discussion. Councilman Ariemma stated the improvements to the GIS fly-over system for the 911 services alone are worth the City's cooperation as this was a safety concern. Councilman Peters commented he recognizes and

empathizes with the County in traveling some of the roads and trying to locate a piece of property. He understands the time and expenses that this requires and every advantage, even if not a direct benefit to the City this is a good show of faith in cooperating with the County. At this time, Mayor McCullough asked for all in favor of the motion to raise their hand, motion approved by all members present.

City Manager Bill Lewis requested to make a public announcement and for Council information, on Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> a large pecan tree will be taken down in Hancock Park. A tree specialist with Hulse Tree and our County Agent both have concurred the tree is rotten at the top and is a danger.

**MAYORS COMMENTS:**

Mayor McCullough informed the annual GMA Convention is June 24-28<sup>th</sup> in which the Mayor and Council will be participating.

**CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilman Norton stated he appreciated City staff's ideas and creativity in the parking spaces at the City parking lot.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor McCullough entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. A motion was made by Councilman Lord, seconded by Sam Norton and approved by all members present.

APPROVED BY ME THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk