

**DAHLONEGA CITY COUNCIL
LUMPKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
LUMPKIN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 8, 2008**

Members of the Dahlonega City Council, Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners and Lumpkin County Development Authority met at City Hall on April 8, 2008. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Mayor McCullough advised that the Dahlonega Mohawk Plant is closing within 90 days. Mayor McCullough requested that everyone remember Mohawk's 366 employees that will be without a job. He requested that everyone remember not only the employees but their families in prayer. Mayor McCullough stated that he was informed yesterday by Mohawk authorities that there is nothing the city or county can do to prevent Mohawk's closing. This is an economic decision made by corporate authorities. Other plants have closed recently and all were making spun fiber products. In the last five years that product is down from 9.2 million spun pounds of carpet fiber to 4 million pounds. Mohawk authorities have indicated that they plan to sell the property.

Lumpkin County Commission Chairman Steve Gooch advised that benefits will last only ninety days and he recommended that a strategy be developed for assistance. The North Georgia area has had approximately 9,000 layoffs in the past six months. This is due to manufacturing jobs leaving Georgia and the downturn in the economy. Lumpkin County Development Authority Chairman Bruce Abraham advised that an on-site job fair will be held for Mohawk employees and state authorities will be brought in for assistance. Cable TV Channel 4 will advertise jobs available within this area. Georgia Department of Labor will be at Mohawk this week to give assistance to all employees. Employees will also be made aware that continuing education is available with grants to assist in paying for further education.

Former Lumpkin County Commissioner J.B. Jones stated that this is the saddest day in Lumpkin County and he urged everyone to work together to assist Mohawk employees. City Manager Bill Lewis stated that we need to look at this as an opportunity to diversify and create something positive. Council Member Bill Scott advised that this is happening all over the US. It was recommended that officials talk to Mohawk Authorities and see if they have a secondary plan. Gary McCullough, Steve Gooch, Bill Lewis, Joel Cordle, Bruce Abraham and Mike Cottrell agreed to attend a meeting next week in Calhoun to find out the company's plan for the building. It was suggested that a multi-use of the building might be one option.

Commissioner Gooch recommended that the city and county work with other industries to keep them strong. He advised that a lot of changes can take place within a short period of time. He also recommended that Lumpkin County offer employee incentives to hire displaced workers. Special tax credits are also available to employers who hire displaced employees.

Mayor McCullough thanked everyone for attending. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.