

**DAHLONEGA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
AUGUST 20, 2008**

The Dahlonega City Council met on August 20, 2008 at City Hall. Council members present were Michael Clemons, Guy Laboa, Sam Norton, Gerald Lord and Terry Peters. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

City Manager Bill Lewis presented the FY 09 Draft Budget. Mr. Lewis advised that the budget for FY 2009 will be affected by the slowing economy, the high cost of fuel and petroleum based products, the closing of Mohawk Industries and lower interest rates on cash invested. Mr. Lewis stated that the strong development growth during 2006 and 2007 has had a positive effect on the 2008 tax digest and tourism/visitor related revenues have held steady through July, 2008. Our tax digest growth, steady retail sales related revenues, along with resumed municipal court activity, recommended fee and rate increases, and expense controls have offset the revenue shortfalls. He also advised that a 3 percent COLA is recommended for all employees. Other personnel cost increases include a 19 percent increase in retirement due to staffing increases over the last four years and the employee population age increasing. Workers compensation costs also increased due to increased payroll and rate increases. Group health insurance and property and liability loss coverage remain the same as last year.

A power-point presentation was given by Finance Officer Chris Austin in which highlights for the General Fund were presented. The General Fund Budget is projected at \$3,169,640. This is an increase of \$17,089 over the FY 2008 Budget and a decrease of \$76,860 over the FY 2008 actual. There is no recommended increase in tax millage rates. Council discussed changes to travel and education and training costs. The general consensus was to reduce these costs by reducing the number of days for attendance at the GMA Convention and also reducing the number of people attending the National League of Cities Convention. The council also discussed the need to increase fees for alcohol license. After discussion, the majority of council members agreed that the fees would increase to \$800.00 for beer and wine licenses and \$2500 for distilled spirits licenses. The council discussed the recommendation to replace the Parks Department Employee and to add this employee to the Street Department. Mr. Lewis recommended replacing this employee in the Street Department next spring. Council members discussed the option of hiring temporary labor or other options. The council also agreed that the cost for hauling mulch for city residents be increased to \$25.00 per load immediately. The council also discussed hauling waste to the county transfer station in lieu of hauling to Eagle Point Landfill. Council members requested to be given more specific cost for these options. Gerald Lord also recommended using front

loading sanitation trucks to save labor costs. Mayor McCullough stated that the time to do this is when we purchase new vehicles. Council members also recommended that a side loading vehicle be used for residential pick up. Michael Clemons recommended increasing the cost for cemetery lots and opening and closing graves.

The work session was adjourned. Council members agreed to resume the meeting to discuss the budget on Monday, August 25 at 10:00 a.m.

**DAHLONEGA CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
AUGUST 20, 2008**

The Dahlonega City Council met at City Hall on August 20, 2008. Council members present were Michael Clemons, Gerald Lord, Sam Norton, Terry Peters and Guy Laboa. Mayor Gary McCullough called the Public Hearing to order at 4:00 p.m. Mayor McCullough advised that the City Council approved a new dumpster site for the public square but after some complaints were issued the Council agreed to hold another Public Hearing to reconsider the dumpster site.

City Manager Bill Lewis read a statement concerning the problem: As downtown Dahlonega has grown and particularly as more restaurants have opened, the daily disposal and collection of garbage has increased, and a disposal site was constructed in the Warwick Street parking lot behind the Moore and Fred Jones Buildings. As growth has continued garbage disposal has become a greater concern for the downtown merchants, the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Dahlonega. The problem has become worse as some merchants carelessly throw their trash every place but in the dumpsters. Tourists using the city parking lot are greeted by a dumpster. Merchants and the Chamber continue to complain about the image we were presenting to visitors. In 2001, DDA Director Larry Sorohan began a campaign to address the problem. Mr. Sorohan requested assistance from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to study the problem and make recommendations for a resolution. Out of this effort came improved fencing and the installation of shrubbery. This work was only a temporary fix to the problem. Complaints continued and finally in 2008 the Chamber of Commerce asked the City to hold a meeting of merchants to seek a permanent solution. On May 9, 2008 invitations to a meeting were hand delivered to 44 businesses in the affected area. On May 16, 2008 a meeting was held at City Hall for the affected business owners input following 44 hand delivered invitations. Fifteen people showed up including six city representatives. The consensus was that the dumpster was an eyesore to visitors and needed to be relocated. Hancock Park was suggested as a relocation site and since the Hancock Park Master Plan adopted by the City recommended location of the dumpsters in Hancock Park facing Meaders Street, this was the site chosen. Forty-five days later after notifying the restaurants they should make other arrangements for disposal of their grease, work began on relocating the dumpsters to the new location facing Meaders Street. After this work had begun Mr. Jerry Butler called to complain about the new site. Mr. Butler and Ms. Susan Rose from Littlefield Cottage came to the August City Council Meeting and voiced their opposition to the new site.

City Attorney Doug Parks conducted the Public Hearing asking for citizen's comments opposing the Meaders Street Dumpster Site. Susan Rose advised that she is the owner of Littlefield Cottage located on Meaders Street. Ms. Rose advised that she did not receive notification of the dumpster's relocation in front of her business. When the construction

of the dumpster pad was in progress she assumed it was for the park's new pavilion. Ms. Rose advised that several people oppose the new site as sanitation and odor will be a problem.

Victoria Stanley spoke in opposition to the new site. Ms. Stanley advised that she lives in an apartment on Hawkins Street and noise is a problem for her. Rodents will also be a problem.

Robert Bridges recommended that the dumpster site be moved down the hill and that a brick structure be constructed over the dumpster site.

Michael Rhodium advised that historical artifacts can be found on the dumpster site and therefore the site should be relocated.

Mr. Parks asked for comments in approval of the new dumpster site:

Gary Powers, President of the Dahlonga Chamber of Commerce, advised that notices of the new dumpster site were sent to every business. He also stated that he has not seen any other site that would be more acceptable.

Kathy Moore advised that she owns a business located at 94 Public Square. Ms. Moore stated that the city has already paid for the new dumpster site and she sees no problem with the new location. The city should not spend any more money to move the site.

Mr. Lewis advised that the site contains three dumpsters. Two are for garbage and a third is for cardboard recycling. The pad they sit on is 20' by 30' with a 30' driveway pad for access by trucks. The total size of the pad is 30' by 50'. It is constructed with a drain which is connected to the city sewer system. He advised that the city intends to pressure wash and deodorize the site at least twice per week. The run off from pressure washing and rain fall will be directed to the sewer. Garbage and cardboard will be disposed of at least once per day and more if required. The entire site will be surrounded by an 8' high wooden fence that will be covered with large shrubs. There will be a large covered gate that will provide truck access and will remain locked. A small walk-in gate will be provided to allow merchants entry to dispose of garbage. There will be no grease or oil disposal at this site.

Mayor Gary McCullough thanked everyone for their comments. He stated that any where you place the dumpster someone will be unhappy. Guy Laboa advised that the time of day for garbage pickup can be adjusted and rodents can be controlled. DDA Director Joel Cordle stated that he personally delivered a notice to Ms. Rose prior to the May 16 Public Hearing. Michael Clemons stated that he would like to see the dumpsters relocated but the majority of council members agreed that the dumpster should not be relocated at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

