

City of Walthourville
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
Walthourville Police Department

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Sarah B. Hayes.

II. Roll Call: The Roll was taken by the City Clerk with the following members present:

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes
Councilman Mitchell Boston
Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly

Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette
Councilman Patrick Underwood
Councilman Robert Dodd

Attorney Luke R. Moses was present.

III. Invocation: The invocation was rendered by Councilman Mitchell Boston.

IV. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

V. Approval of Agenda: The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly. Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. Approval of Minutes from the July 23, 2024 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was added by Councilman Dodd. Vote: 3-2: Motion Carried.

Members Voting Favorably were Councilmembers Boston, Kelly and Dodd.

Members Voting Unfavorably were Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and Councilmember Boston.

VII. Presentation

City of Walthourville Police Department

Chief Christopher Reed administered the Oath of Office to (two) new Police Officers. Officer Jonathan Payne and Officer Evasio Warren. Officer Payne is the new Code-Enforcement Officer, and he will work part-time as a regular officer. Officer Warren is retired military, and he states that he is excited to a part of the Team.

VIII. Agenda Items

1. StackBench App

Chief Christopher Reed

Stated he is seeking approval to configure/create the StackBench App. Stack Bench is a company that offers public safety apps designed for agencies to improve communication and interaction between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. In Walthourville, the app provided by Stack Bench will enable officers to deliver real-time information to citizens, enhancing public safety and community engagement. The app also allows citizens to interact directly with officers, creating a more responsive and connected environment.

Additionally, the app features wellness check capabilities for officers and their families, ensuring their well-being is monitored and supported. Information relevant to the officers can also be disseminated through the app, ensuring that they stay informed and connected. The app is available for both iPhone and Android users, making it accessible to a wide range of people. The cost of the App is \$2500 annually. A discussion ensued pertaining to the difference in the city's notification system that was enacted in June of this year. Chief Reed stated this APP was directly associated and tailored for Law Enforcement. Liberty

County Sheriff's Department and City of Hinesville's Police Department both utilize this APP. Additionally information was requested from Chief Reed and no action was taken on this item.

2. Illegal Dumping Ordinance Sign.

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

Stated the city approved the Illegal Dumping Ordinance at the June 23, 2024, meeting and the signage has been ordered and will be placed around the city.

IX. Department Reports

City of Walthourville

Mr. Patrick Golphin

Water Department

Reported utility bills were sent out, despite the city being closed due to Tropical Storm Debby. The website is updated with the new water rates. Disconnection for non-paying Fire Fee Citizens will begin. The Mayor and Council authorized City Hall to disconnect at the July 23rd meeting.

Chief Nicolas Maxwell

Fire Department

Reported the department has answered the following calls within the two weeks from the last meeting on July 23, 2024 which are: 50 calls total, 35 which are medical, 2 fires and 9 miscellaneous calls. He further added the Department was operational and vigilant during Tropical Storm Debby. He added that he rode the city during the storm with Chief Reed and Councilmen Boston and Underwood. The Department's School Supply Closet has been activated and is open to any citizen experiencing a fire related crisis in Liberty County.

Chief Christopher Reed

Police Department

Reported the department has answered the following calls within the two weeks from the last meeting on July 23, 2024, which are 296 calls, 40 reports generated, 31 citations written, and 9 warnings. The department conducted Active Shooter Training July 31st and August 1st at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Hinesville.

X. Citizens Comments:

Ms. Gwen Dykes stated this is her third (3) time addressing the sanitation issue. She is opposed privatization because the city has a good department, the employees are great, and we have the equipment. She suggests increasing the fees for the services so it can remain with the city. She stated the city doesn't need another APP, she has signed up for the alerts that the city sends out and that is working fine. We don't need to spend anymore money if we don't have to. She requested a flyer for additional information.

Mr. Arnold Moore stated he has concerned about the city's sanitation/bulk trash. He would like to know specifically what does the city collect? He also addressed the increased water bill. Mr. Moore stated he moved to Walthourville in December of 2023, and he is ready to sell his home and move because of all the fees that have happened so quickly.

XI. Council Comments

Elected Officials

Councilman Boston stated two companies submitted Bids which are: ABC Waste and Atlantic Waste. He stated he remains committed that the city needs to "get out of the trash business." Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated the city currently owed Liberty County \$ 63,000 in expenses. Councilman Boston stated the cost will increase when the new bill is transmitted. He relinquished and asked the bidders to make comments.

Sam Sullivan with Atlantic Waste stated his company services many Municipal Governments, they are based in Pooler and serve over 130,000 households. They have transfer stations in both Pooler and Statesboro. They employ 250 employees, and they have 130 trucks, and their service is more costly,

because of the number of employees and fleet. He stated he believes the city should keep the billing in-house. He added that Ms. Moss (City Clerk) would not be happy with this. Ms. Moss addressed Mr. Sullivan and stated, "this is not Ms. Moss's decision this is the Mayor and Council who govern the city, the RFP was drafted and give to me by Councilman Boston to post. The component that I am concerned about is the Customer Service that Atlantic will be able to provide our citizens, because we take care of our citizens."

Charles Stewart with ABC Waste stated his company services many households, they service commercial customers in parts of Chatham County, Effingham County, Beaufort County and Bryan County. They service 11,000 customers weekly and have 25 employes and over 20 vehicles in their fleet. He said they are smaller, but they work efficiently and effectively just like their large competitors. He added they are a small family business and that is the service they offer their citizens.

Mayor Hayes thanked each of these companies for their presentations. She stated the city needs to allow the citizens to have input and hear their concerns about the potential privatization. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette concurred. The Mayor and Council scheduled a Public Hearing for Thursday August 22, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Police Department.

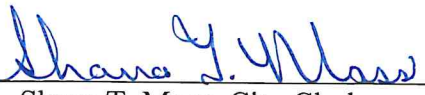
Councilman Underwood questioned the city's finances. He stated the council has not been updated and they have only received two (2) reports since February/March. He said he would like to have a report and see the city's bills. Mayor Hayes stated the bills are available every day at City Hall. She asked that the council please let the City Hall Team know that you are coming so they can be available and not be engrossed in working on another project and the team be happy to help them.

Councilwoman Kelly had no comment(s).


Mayor Pro Tem Lovette had no comment(s).

Councilman Dodd had no comment(s).

- XII. Mayor Comments Mayor Sarah B. Hayes
Stated that city information is being circulated via the city's notification system.
- XIII. Executive Session None
- XIV. Adjournment: At 7:43 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly.



Shana T. Moss, City Clerk



Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor