

City of Walthourville
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
July 23, 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

The attendance of the Council constituted a quorum.

Attorney Andrew M. Ruberti of was present in the absence of City Attorney Luke R. Moses.

III. The invocation was given by Pastor Alan Stewart of Victory Baptist Church.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

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

VI. Approval of Minutes:

- July 9, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes: The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was added by Councilman Dodd. Vote: 4-1: Motion Carried. Opposed: Mayor Pro Tem Lovette.
- July 9, 2023 Executive Session Minutes: The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly. Vote: 3-2: Motion Carried. Councilmembers voting favorably were: Councilmen Boston Underwood and Councilwoman Kelly. Councilmembers opposed: Mayor Pro Lovette and Councilman Dodd.

VII. Presentations

None

VIII. Agenda Items

1. City of Walthourville

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

Presented an Illegal Dumping Ordinance for. She stated illegal dumping has become prevalent in the city and oftentimes contractors will bring and or leave their debris for the city to collect. She added that tires are being dumped illegally in the city, along with furniture and other huge items. The fees for dumping can be modified but she feels a stiff penalty will deter individuals from dumping. Councilwoman Kelly stated she felt the initial fine should be more than \$50.00 and the fifth offense should be very severe. The fines will be as follows: 1st offense \$150.00; 2nd offense, \$300.00; 3rd offense, \$500.00; 4th offense \$700.00 and upon a fifth offense \$1,000.00 The motion to approve the illegal dumping ordinance and make it effective immediately was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Underwood. Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. City of Walthourville

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

Stated the Public Defender that is used by the City for Municipal Court be enacted. The Municipal Court Defender is Attorney Earle Duncan. Attorney Duncan will be paid \$350.00 per appearance when court is held monthly. If Attorney Duncan does not attend court, he will not be paid. This is the amount the public defender is currently receiving. A formal contract was not enacted, and now Public Defender Duncan will have a formal contract. The motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Lovette and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly.

Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. City of Walthourville

Mayor and Council

The Mayor and Council have debated for months about the price fee increase for Johnnie Frasier Park. The rental of the park and the fees do not cover the overhead, maintenance, and upkeep. Oftentimes the park is rented to individuals who make a profit and charge other vendors. Citizens who rent the park utilize the water that is paid for by the city. The Park Fee Increase is reflected as follows and will become effective on August 1, 2024.

For Profit Event Fee is \$500.00 (8am to 8 pm) – No deposit will be refunded for a Profit Event. If the renter fails to disclose that the event is “for Profit, a citation will be issued, and the renter must cover the cost of any court fees.

Full Day Rental Fee is \$150.00 (8am to 8 pm) with a \$50.00 refund if the park is left clean. Half Day Rental is \$100 (8am - 2pm or 2pm - 8 pm) with a \$50.00 refund. The motion to approve the fee increases was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Underwood.

Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

IX. Department Reports

City of Walthourville Department Heads

Mr. Patrick Golphin

Water Department

Mr. Golphin informed the Mayor and Council that some citizens are not paying the \$31.60 Fire Fee that was enacted in March of 2024. He stated that he wanted to obtain clarity, “did the Mayor and Council want the Water Department to proceed with disconnecting the citizens who have not and are refusing to pay the Fire Fee?” Mr. Golphin stated some citizens have said they will not pay the fire fee and have a balance on their account. All members of the Mayor and Council stated yes, to proceed. That is the rule they enacted in February 2024 when the Fire Fee was voted on at the February 13, 2024, Mayor and Council Meeting. All members of the Mayor and Council stated yes, to process with the delinquent Fire Fee Disconnections. Mr. Golphin stated the team would begin disconnection for delinquent Fire Fee’s in March. Councilman Underwood stated, “when the citizens get upset or irate about the disconnection, you all (City Hall Employees) give them our (Elected Officials) phone numbers. Mr. Golphin, Thanked Councilman Underwood for his concern.

Chief Nicolas Maxwell

Fire Department

Chief Maxwell gave the department statistics for the past two weeks which consisted of 33 calls, 20 medical and 2 fires. He stated the department was initializing a Back-to-School Supply Closet. This closet will be used for families who have burnout. He stated the department feels that school supplies should be the last thing on a parent’s mind when suffering a loss from a fire. He also stated the Department saved a home and rescued a citizen that was trapped in a home.

Major Anthony Hooker

Police Department

Major Hooker gave the report in the absence of Chief Reed who was attending the Chiefs Conference in Savannah. He stated since the last meeting the department has answered and responded to 90 calls. He added that most of the calls are domestic violence. He addressed alarms in city, and if a citizen's alarm is going off, officers are not allowed to blast lights and sirens. He further addressed that school will be starting soon and anyone who passes a school bus will be fined \$1,000 and if there is not a barrier in the center of the lane, all traffic must stop in both directions. He further added that at the beginning of school there will be a joint effort between the Fire and Police Departments to be at Bus Stops.

X. Citizens Comments

Walthourville Citizens

1. Ms. Alma Wells inquired about the dry trash pickup and what does it entail? She was informed that bulk trash consists of limbs, and appliances, no tires or contractor items. She also stated that oftentimes during the night other citizens will illegally dump in/on the yards of others.

2. Mr. Mike Talley inquired to the Police Department about not going to alarm call blasting lights and sirens. He stated but he often sees the Police Officers going at a high rate of speed. Major Hooker addressed the issue and stated there are mitigating circumstances where they will ride without lights and sirens because of the nature of the call.

3. Pastor Alan Stewart of Victory Baptist Church stated the church have maintained Sparrow Lane. Sparrow Lane cuts through Victory Baptist and they maintain the road. Since the city enforced the ordinance of bagging the leaves they don't have the manpower to bag the leaves. He would like the Mayor and Council to reconsider.

XI. Council Comments

City of Walthourville

Councilman Mitchell Boston stated he wanted to address the City's Website and the FAQ Page. He also announced the Sanitation Bid Openings would be opened publicly at 10:00 AM on Thursday July 25, 2024, at the Police Department. He also inquired about the city's finances and was informed by the Mayor that CKH Consulting was still working on the financials.

Councilman Patrick Underwood stated the Fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club was a great success. The Liberty County Elected Officials played the Boys and Girls Club. He Thanked Councilman Boston for spearheading and being the visionary for the project. He gave accolades to all the elected officials for being present, Walthourville was the only city to have all elected officials present. Councilman Dodd scored the winning points for the Elected Officials. He addressed that leaves are not being picked up because they are not being bagged. He further added that during the Citizens Comments of the meeting that the citizens only be allowed to speak to the Mayor and Council and not the audience. He stated this keeps the meeting orderly.

Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly reminded everyone about the City's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated the vendors that she obtained bids for erecting the fence at Johnnie Frasier Park are still contacting her about the status of constructing the fence.

Councilman Dodd had no report.

XII. Office of the Mayor

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

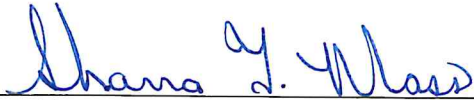
Spoke about the Memorial Service for the Liberty County Firefighter that was killed. She stated the Memorial Service would be August 10th (she emailed the arrangements to everyone) and she encouraged the city to attend. She also spoke about the city's 50th Anniversary Celebration. She stated the original founders of the city and previous members of the Mayor and Council that have served would be recognized.

Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked, "what is the status of the finances? Mayor Hayes stated the finances are doing better, the CPA is working on getting information caught up. She added that CKH told her that Former CPA, Mr. Matthew Caines, had done such a good job of keeping the finances current that it was making their jobs easier. The Mayor Pro Tem had an additional question about the intersection of Shaw and Airport Road and if a roundabout would be constructed. Mayor Hayes stated she had a meeting with DOT and a roundabout wasn't mentioned, she stated she did ask DOT about erecting a light at that intersection.

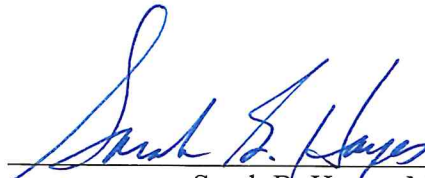
XIII, Executive Session

None

XIV. Adjournment: At 7:02 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Dodd and the second was provided by Councilman Kelly.
Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.



Shana T. Moss, City Clerk



Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor