

City of Walthourville
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
Walthourville Police Department

- I. Meeting Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Sarah B. Hayes.
- II. The roll was taken by the City Clerk with the following members present:

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes	Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette
Councilman Mitchell Boston	Councilman Patrick Underwood
Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly	

Member Absent due to Work related Absence: Councilman Robert Dodd

The attendance of the Council constituted a quorum.

Attorney Luke R. Moses was present via telephone.

- III. The invocation was given by Councilman Patrick Underwood.
- IV. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.
- V. Adoption of City Council Agenda: The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and the second was provided by Councilwoman Kelly. Vote: 4-0: Motion Carried.
- VI. Adoption of City Council Minutes:
March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes: The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Boston. Vote: 3-0: Motion Carried.
Mayor Pro Tem Lovette did not vote.
March 18, 2024 Called Meeting Minutes: The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Boston. Vote: 3-0: Motion Carried.
- VII. Presentation(s) None
- VIII. Agenda Items:

1. LCPC Ms. Lori Parks
Ms. Parks presented a Business License Request named Gotta Have Polish Spa. The business will be located at 4981 West Oglethorpe Highway. The business will be a full services nail salon. The motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and the second was added by Councilman Boston. Vote: 4-0: Motion Carried.

2. LCPC Ms. Mardee Sanchez
Ms. Sanchez presented the Final Plat for SIMCOE Investment Group, The Hamlet Townhomes. She stated there will be 46 units that will be townhouses and will be situated on 71/2 acres and they will

be located on Shaw Road. The history of the property consist of entails, at the end of 2019, the property was rezoned from R-2 to a PUD for 14 duplexes (28 units) and plans were approved shortly thereafter. The land was cleared for construction and the project was abandoned.

In April of 2023, an amendment to the PUD was approved to change the project from duplexes to townhomes. 775 feet of new street will be dedicated to the city and the city's utilities will include water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure. Mr. Jamie Stuckey of T.R. Long Engineering stated they recommended a fence be placed around the pond. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was added by Councilman Underwood. Vote: 4-0: Motion Carried.

3. LCPC

Ms. Mardee Sanchez

Ms. Sanchez presented the Preliminary Plat for Tibet Creek Investors, LLC. The developer is Mr. Daniel Dasher and is known as the Talmadge Road Subdivision. The subdivision will be located at Talmadge Road and Arnall Drive. There will be 24 lots of single-family dwellings situated on 11 acres and they are zoned R-2. Each dwelling will have ½ acre lots. The final plat will be presented to the Planning Commission on April 23rd. Councilman Boston inquired about sidewalks on Talmadge and he was informed that GDOT does not approve sidewalks on Talmadge due to the heavy traffic. The Mayor Pro Tem contrasted the Flemington GDOT Project that will entail sidewalks. She was informed that the Right-of-Way on Highway 84 is larger in Flemington than the narrowing on Talmadge Road. Mr. Stuckey stated there will be an HOA and they can place sidewalks on individual driveways. The motion to approve with the new additions of the HOA and individual sidewalks was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lovette and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly. Vote: 4-0: Motion Carried.

4. City of Walthourville

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

Presented an Earth Day Proclamation for Keep Liberty Beautiful. This proclamation designated April 19, 2024, as Earth Day in the City. The Earth Day Celebration in Liberty County will be held at Bryant Commons from 3:30 PM-6:00 PM.

IX. Department Reports

City of Walthourville Departments

Water Department

Mr. Patrick Golphin

Reported that there were no smelly water calls. The Fire Fee was placed on the March utility bills.

Fire Department

Captain Muhammad Bryant

Chief Nicolas Maxwell was attending training. Captain Bryant reported the Fire Department has responded to 19 calls, 12 of those were EMS and 3 were vehicle accidents.

Police Department

Chief Christopher Reed

Reported that Officer Carter had surgery and was recovering. Officer Michalowicz was attending training in Forsyth. The department will have firearm qualifications in the next few weeks. The Chevy Tahoe was placed in the shop and the vehicle was still covered under the warranty. The department has answered 94 calls, issued 36 warnings, and given 36 tickets. The city has collected \$7,000 with the diversion program, which does not affect a citizen's license.

X. Governing Body Comments

Councilman Mitchell Boston inquired about the timeline for the Millage. He stated at the Mayor and Council Workshop they discussed dates for the Millage Hearings and the dates were not advertised in the newspaper. Attorney Moses stated, the Mayor and Council had a Special Called Meeting on March 18th, 2024 to establish the millage and he had less than 12 hours to publicize it with the Coastal Courier (newspaper). He stated it would have been impossible to get the information to the Coastal Courier by

noon the next day. He recommended the Mayor and Council set the date(s) at least a week later to give sufficient advertising time.

Councilman Patrick Underwood stated he wanted to address the citizens about the Fire Fee. He further added that it was not the City Hall's Team decision to implement the Fire Fee; it was the Mayor and Council; therefore, citizens should not be calling or coming to City Hall being rude and nasty. He stated he had been in City Hall and observed the behavior of some of the citizens. He stated if anyone had a problem they need to contact the Elected Officials. He personally showed a flyer with all Elected Officials contact information and stated to give them a call. He also reported about the Easter Celebration that will be held on Saturday March 30th from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM at Johnnie Frasier Park. This event is being sponsored by donations from citizens, some of the Elected Officials and Employees and Attorney Moses.

Councilwoman Bridgtte Kelly, reported that she is working on an LMIG Grant through GDOT. She has been working with the City's CPA to obtain a letter stating that the city's audits are in progress. She stated she also has the name of another CPA.

Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette reported she attended an event at Johnnie Frasier Park that was held by the Car Club. She stated she was amazed that this event catered to the children. Also, she reported the cheapest quote she received for a commercial fence was \$64,000 and the most expensive was \$74,000 for a commercial grade fence. Also, Liberty County will be celebrating its 250th Birthday in 2026 and she is part of the committee. Currently, they are in the information gathering stage of the celebration. She further added, Liberty County School System will be having their Summer School Program and she encouraged parents to have their children to participate, as this enhances their learning during the summer months.

Councilman Robert Dodd was absent due to work commitment.

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes, Thanked the citizens for coming out and being apart of their government. She stated that April 19th would be Earth Day and April 27th would be the Great American City Cleanup Day. She addressed the Fire Fee and the commencement of the City's Recycling. She stated the communication could have been better to inform everyone and she takes responsibility for that. "She added that no one wanted a fire fee, she didn't want one, but the city has more bills than we have money." The bills the city has are operating bills, she has reviewed and looked into the city's finances, and she vehemently stated there is no money missing or stolen. She agreed that the city will do a Forensic Audit when the city's fund balance increases.

Mayor Hayes also stated "the city's infrastructure is failing due to the installation of the pipes in 1974. The city is working on repairing the pipes, but we have limited manpower. The city contracts with a Water Specialist Company who conducts water sampling 365 days a year. We have to keep the water safe and there is a cost associated with everything." She addressed the landfill bills and the \$4,500 deficit the city is in monthly due to the Sanitation/Bulk Trash collection.

She stated the City Hall Team has been treated harshly due to the Fire Fee. Citizens have come in and called being nasty. "They have been subjected to being cursed out, one citizen used the "N" word when speaking to the employees. She said this is unacceptable and we all must treat one another civil. She agreed with Councilman Underwood, she encouraged anyone to contact the elected officials they are the ones who set the rules for the city.

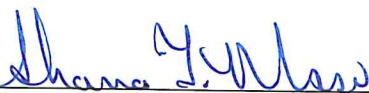
Councilman Boston stated he would be preparing a Request for Proposal for the city's Sanitation Collection.

XI. Citizens Comments: Comments are 3 minutes.


1. Gary Bradham stated he was opposed to the Fire Department. The city does not need a Fire Department. He is retired Firefighter for the Department of Defense. He stated the city was not notified. Councilwoman Kelly asked what do you want us to do? The information was placed on the city's Facebook Page and the City's Website. He said the city should have been placed in the newspaper.
2. Gwen Dykes stated she has lived in Walthourville all her life. She is confused. She would like a breakdown of what it cost to operate the Fire and Police Department. She is not opposed to the \$31.60 per month because she wants to keep both the Fire and Police Departments.
3. Clark Craven stated he lives in Long County, yet when he calls 911, he is routed to Long County. The Walthourville Fire Department did not respond because he is in Long County. City Clerk Moss stated the city checked the boundary lines and he is in Long County. \$31.60 has been credited to his account.
4. Regina Florence, stated with the Fire Fee, "can the Mayor and Council give everyone a little grace?" She said some citizens need some time to arrange their finances.
5. Charlie Richardson stated we should have implemented property taxes in Walthourville. He stated the city is growing and growth brings about cost.
6. Johnny Fullmore stated he did not receive any information or notification about the Fire Fee. He cannot stand not receiving information. He is retired from the military and the military keeps everyone informed.
7. Edna Powell stated she was surprised about the Fire Fee. This is a shock because of the financial hardship it poses.
8. Rema Bryant, spoke regarding the fire fee and the recycle trash can collection. She would like the city to send out information to the citizens.

XII. Executive Session, none.

XIII. Adjournment: The motion to adjourn at 8:20 PM was made by Mayor Pro Lovette and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly.



Shana T. Moss, City Clerk



Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor