

City of Walthourville
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
May 28, 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	Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette (via telephone)
Councilman Mitchell Boston	Councilman Patrick Underwood
Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly	Councilman Robert Dodd

The attendance of the council constituted a quorum

Attorney Luke R. Moses was present.

- III. Invocation: Was given by Mayor Sarah B. Hayes.
- 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 Councilman Boston.
Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.
- VI. Approval of Minutes: The motion to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2024 meeting was made by Councilman Boston and the second was provided by Councilman Dodd.
Vote: 4-1: Motion Carried.
Councilmembers voting favorably were: Councilmen Boston, Underwood, Kelly and Dodd.
Councilmember opposed: Mayor Pro Tem Lovette.
- VII. Presentations:

1. Liberty Transit

Mrs. Rachael Hatcher stated Liberty Transit was in the process of compiling their Transit Development Plan (TDP) which is a strategic planning document that defines a community's public transit needs. The purpose is to solicit broad input, coordinate with other plans, explore community goals, define alternative courses of action and to develop systematic plans and monitoring programs. She also stated that the Transit Program was in the process of Public Outreach-they wanted to hear from the community, what is needed of the transit program? They are conducting community events, public surveys, council workshops, stakeholder committee meetings, HAMPO Presentations, website and social medial publications and a 30-day Public Comment Period.

Liberty Transit is trying to increase bus stops/service in rural areas to improve accessibility, how to utilize the bus system effectively, bus stop safety-dangerous intersections without lights or sidewalks, having regional connections to neighboring counties like Bryan and Chatham. The newest feature that will be offered by Liberty Transit will be Microtransit. Microtransit is a flexible transit service that uses a mobile application to schedule trips between a requested pick-up and drop-off location. This is similar to ride hailing services, they are offered within a specified zone and trips are shared, with the average wait time being reduced to 30 minutes. The key benefits of Microtransit are accessibility and being able to schedule and pickup/drop/off and location flexibility. Mayor Hayes stated she appreciated this information. The City of Walthourville does not have a lot of participation in riding Liberty Transit. This was informational only and required no action by the Mayor and Council at this time.

2. Liberty County EMA

Councilman Robert Dodd

Liberty County EMA Director, Councilman Robert Dodd gave a comprehensive presentation about Hurricane Season 2024. He said, the Hurricane Season begins on June 1st and lasts until November 30th. The World Meteorological Organization has identified 21 names for Hurricanes this year. The peak Hurricane Season is the month of September, and everyone should have a Hurricane Plan and Hurricane Kit at their homes that they can easily access. Tropical Cyclone Basics include the eye is the center where there is little to no wind/rain, the eye wall around the “eye” contains the strongest winds and the rain bands can extend hundreds of miles from the eye and contain strong winds, heavy rain and possible tornadoes.

There are two Evacuation Zones in Liberty County, Zone A and B. The City of Walthourville is in Zone B. Councilman Dodd referenced the Hurricane Registry that is offered by GEMA (Georgia Emergency Management Agency). The Hurricane Registry is for individuals with functional access or medical needs, the number is 1-833-243-7344. He also stated if an evacuation order is issued, please adhere. When winds get as high as 45 miles per hour, Public Safety will not come out. When an evacuation is issued, and the county allows re-entry the Sheriff will authorize who can return and the levels, such as Public Safety and persons with re-entry passes.

VIII. Agenda Items

1. CPA Firm

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes

Mayor Hayes introduced Mr. Roger Nixon of CKH Group Financial LLC. He is the Vice President of Business Development, and his firm works with many municipalities in Georgia. Accompanying Mr. Nixon was CKH Group Partner, Mr. Eon van Wyk. This firm is in Atlanta, Georgia. He stated if hired his firm would come onsite and work with the city staff to perform the work. He is also confident that some of the work can be performed remotely. He stated he was in the city on May 24th and met with Mayor Hayes, Ms. Moss and Mrs. Norris, and he was optimistic and looking forward to working with the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked if this was the only company the city was considering because we (city) needed to have three bids. Attorney Luke R. Moses responded saying, “the city is not required to solicit bids because we are not buying equipment, this is for

professional services-a service that was already intact, and bids are not required.” The Mayor and Council waived taking action because several members wanted to do additional research. This item will be voted on at the June 11, 2024 meeting. City Clerk Moss suggested Mr. Nixon and Mr. Wyn could phone in for the meeting instead of making the long trip from Atlanta and Mayor Hayes agreed that would be feasible.

2. LCPC

Ms. Lori Parks

Presented a Business License request from For Tee-It-Up Lawncare, the business owner is Chad Knudson. The property owner is Mrs. Donna Adams (she was present). The business will be located at 1163 Talmadge Road and is zoned AR-1. The applicant will be using a room in the home for an office to operate the lawn care business only. Mrs. Adams stated Mr. Knudson would only have a truck and a trailer at the site and he would go to customers homes. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Dodd and the second was added by Councilman Boston.

Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. City of Walthourville

Chief Christopher Reed

AT&T/First Net. Chief Reed presented the city had recently participated in a presentation with First Net and AT&T. First Net offers radios and this will be beneficial for the city. Recently several employees have been verbally assaulted by citizens and being on trucks they have no communication, and this is a safety hazard. The cost for the radios will be .99 cents. Also, AT&T will have a tower located in the city in 2025. Currently, the city uses Verizon for cell service and there has been subpar service with dropped calls and dead service areas. Chief Reed said this is a hindrance to the Officers if they cannot use their phones. AT&T will allow \$350.00 for each phone and every city employee who has a phone will be able to retain their number. They will have a choice of an Android or a I-Phone. He stated that AT&T will come onsite and perform the onboarding with each phone user, and everyone will be given a time to come in and have their phone converted. The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Boston.

Vote: 4-1: Motion Carried.

Councilmembers voting favorably were: Boston, Underwood, Kelly and Dodd.
Councilmember opposed: Lovette.

4. LMIG

Mayor and Council

Mayor Hayes reported the city would apply for LMIG (Local Maintenance Improvement Grant) through GDOT. LMIG Funds can be used for road improvements. The deadline for the LMIG application is June 15th, and she has asked City Hall to work on the grant. Mayor Hayes and Councilwoman Kelly suggested the city repair Griffin Road. Councilwoman Kelly stated Turnipseed Engineering has compiled the measurements for Griffin Road and she is in agreement that this is the best option for the city. The motion to approve to submit the LMIG Application for Griffin Road repairs were made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was added by Councilman Underwood.

Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

- IX. Department Reports City of Walthourville
1. Mr. Patrick Golphin Water Department
Reported that the Water Rate Increase will be visible on the June bill. City Hall is working on installing the new rates. Meters will be read on June 6th. Correspondences are being given to citizens about the Water Rate Increase when they come to pay their bill. He also stated the information is also on the city's Facebook page and city website.
2. Chief Nicolas Maxwell Fire Department
Reported the Fire Department have been busy answering calls, both fire and medical. He also stated the Fire Department has partnered with a local dealership that will provide a van for the city's use in the event of a Hurricane Evacuation.
3. Chief Christopher Reed Police Department
Reported the city will have De-Escalation Training on June 3rd from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at the Police Department. This training stems from citizens who have been aggressive with city employees. The department has generated 29 reports since the last meeting and has responded to two vehicle crashes.

X. Mayor and Council Comments Elected Officials

Councilman Mitchell Boston stated he was still in support of the Request for Proposal Bids for the privatization of the city's Sanitation Services.

Councilman Patrick Underwood reported he was proud he has received the city's bills that he has asked for. He mentioned Movie Night at Johnnie Frasier Park on July 4th, the movie that will be shown will be The Lion King.

Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly reported she is happy the city will be applying for an LMIG Grant for the repair of Griffin Road.

Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette reported that she has been in contact with Brooke from Hinesville Fence Company. She is proposing that the fence be erected around the perimeter of the park and the cost estimate is between \$30,000-\$40,000.

Councilman Dodd reiterated the importance of having a Hurricane Plan. He stated now is the time to plan not when a Hurricane is approaching.

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes stated safety training is essential for the employees. Several employees have encountered citizens who have exhibited aggressive behavior toward them. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated she has received several calls from citizen Sylvia Boyd. Ms. Boyd has had ongoing problems with the buzzards flying from the Meat Market. Mayor Hayes stated she is still in communication with the Meat Market about erecting a fence.

XI. Citizens Comments

Walthourville Citizens

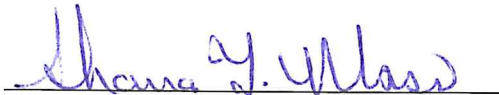
1. Ms. Gwen Dykes-stated Councilman Boston has stated Sanitation cost is expensive. The city has the people in place to perform the work, she's not certain outsourcing is the best idea.

2. Mr. Hakeen Cleary-stated he resides on Arnall Drive (dirt roadside) and he would like to ask the city to dig a little trench so the water will run off into the ditch instead of standing in the road.


XII. Executive Session

None

XIII. Adjournment: At 7:52 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Dodd and the second was added by Councilwoman Kelly. Vote:5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously



Shana T. Moss, City Clerk



Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor