**Draft**

**Regular City Council Meeting**

**March 7, 2023**

**6:30 P.M.**

The Young Harris City Council met Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 6:30 PM for their Regular Monthly Meeting. Present at the meeting were the Mayor: Andrea Gibby; City Clerk: Nicolette Wade; Finance Office: Ana Hess; City Council Members: Matt Miller, Terry Ingram, Steve Clark, Donald Keys and John Kelley; Public Works Supervisor: Dean Stanley; Economic Development Director: Denise McKay; Gordy Jones and Jim Olson of the Towns County Civic Association; Vice President of Finance and Operations at Young Harris College: Bo Wright; Staff Writer for the Towns County Herald: Brittany Holbrooks; Deb Edwards and Nancy Desommes of the Young Harris Planning Commission; Reid Dyer of Hulsey Gay Bell Engineers; Raburne Wilson, Ryan Wilson and, Jeremy Usher of North Mount Zion Church of God; Robert Penland of Penland Builders, Inc.; and Hal Chitwood of Bureau Veritas.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Gibby called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. She asked the Council to look at the Agenda. She said we need to move United Systems UPM proposal from New Business to the Mueller Meter discussion.

**Agenda:** John Kelley made a motion to approve the Agenda with the suggested change, seconded by Terry Ingram and approved unanimously. A corrected copy of the Agenda is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting February 7, 2023:** John Kelley said there are two corrections to the February 7 minutes. On page 4 under Timberline Booster Pump strike out John Kelley who did not meet with Steve and Mark Bond. On page 7 Council Updates next to last sentence reads “cooperation between City and County” but should read “City and College”. John Kelley made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 7 Regular Monthly Meeting with the aforementioned changes, seconded by Steve Clark and approved unanimously. A copy of the corrected minutes is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Minutes of Water/Sewer Committee Meeting – February 28 – 6:00 PM:** John Kelley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28 Water/Sewer Committee Meeting as presented, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously. A copy of the February 28 Minutes is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Appearances:** **Hal Chitwood of Bureau Veritas:** Mr. Chitwood met with John Kelley and Steve Clark and came to explain a little about his company. Mr. Chitwood is a Business Manager for Bureau Veritas. Bureau Veritas works with several cities and counties around the Young Harris area and has a contract with the City of Hiawassee. They do building inspections, planning reviews, permitting review and land development. They work with the EPD. They help city staff with applications. They have a staff of 30 well trained individuals. Mr. Chitwood sent a packet of information to the Council that explains their services. There is a matrix which is essentially a flow chart in the packet. A copy of the packet is attached and incorporated herein by reference. He said their services are provided on an as needed or on call basis. John Kelley explained how Bureau Veritas helped us out with an urgent electrical inspection. He said we do not have the money or the volume for a full time inspector but Bureau Veritas provides services that will help the city. Steve Clark said our current process is confusing. They have talked about a process where Nicolette will receive the application and send it to Bureau Veritas who would review it and make sure everything has been done before sending it to the Council. Steve said he needs to know cost but this would be less expensive than another staff member since we have a low volume of applications. John Kelley asked Mr. Chitwood to develop a fee schedule showing what we currently charge compared to what we should be charging and Steve wanted charges beside the items on the flow chart. Mayor Gibby asked if they are proposing doing away with the Planning Commission and Steve said “No”. After Bureau Veritas makes sure it is complete then goes to the Planning Commission. Attorney Harkins said there are 12 or 14 things for which we require permits. He wants a flow chart for the process. The Council decided to set an Administrative Committee Meeting for Tuesday, March 21 at 6:00 PM to discuss this issue.

**Financial Report – Ana Hess:** The auditor’s completed field work last Thursday but have not completed all their work. They still have to wrap up a few items. They are responsible for all the taxes, listing and depreciation. Hopefully they will have the audit complete within the next few weeks but the January Financial Report cannot be completed until the auditors complete their work. She changed our cell phones from AT&T to Verizon to save some of the cost. Ana reported everything else as being good but at the April meeting the Council will receive Financials for both January and February.

Steve Clark would like the Council to be able to look at the Financials at an optional work session at 6:00 PM ahead of the regular meeting. Mayor Gibby said Ana is looking into a One Drive setup and moving the city toward paperless where everyone can log in and get financials and everything that you need. She acknowledged the fact the Council may need training sessions. The Mayor asked everyone to bring their computers to the next meeting.

**Timberline Booster Pump:** Mayor Gibby said the bids are out for the pump. Bids have to be in the City Hall Office before the March 31, 2023 deadline at 3:00 PM.

**Sewer Line Rehabilitation:** Steve said he is looking for the data for the study from 8 or 9 years ago. Reid Dyer said he could get it for him.

**Mueller Water Meters and United Systems UPM Proposal:** Mayor Gibby reminded the Council that two people from United Systems made a presentation at the February Council Meeting. There was also a Water/Sewer Committee Meeting with discussion about the update. Part of the discussion was to hire contractors to replace all the meters in a month or month and a half. Ana gave the Council a proposal of the total cost including cost of different sizes of meters that would be necessary.

Steve suggested to take the 1, 2 and 3 meters out because ITRON does not have the meters in that size now. Defer all the large meters to a future time. John Kelley asked if we can keep them to hold the price at a fixed price until they have the larger meters. Ana said United Systems does not charge us for anything we don’t get. A copy of the United Systems proposal is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Mayor Gibby explained that our phone system stopped working and are so old they cannot be repaired. The Windstream technician had to move Ana’s phone to Nicolette’s desk and tape the cord to the floor. Part of the United System’s proposal is replace the telephones.

The Council discussed what should be done. Dean said we should include the one inch and two inch meters. Right now they can’t replace the three inch and up.

Mayor Gibby said when we make an agreement we can tell them to start with the 5/8 and ¾ meters and work from there. It will take 2 to 3 months to get those done and we can revisit this decision. She recapped the thoughts of the Council saying we are going with this proposal. We’re going to let Dean work with them. We understand we only pay for what they are putting in and we don’t pay for what they don’t have. Dean should be overseeing this project.

Dean suggested that when they install new meters it would be best to change out meter boxes that have deteriorated.

Attorney Harkins wants to make sure approving the price list is not approving the service agreement. Ana said the agreement is good for 5 years but the postage may go up and cause some change.

In response to Steve’s question as to what electrical components there will be to communicate, Dean explained they will install 100 Cellular Endpoints and there are adapters that have to be fitted on current meters so they will transmit.

John Kelley made a motion to accept the United Systems Financial proposal with Dean overseeing the project as Project Manager and Ana and Attorney Harkins reviewing finances and the service agreement, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously.

**Business License Approval:** Camille Cina filed for a Business License for her company, Pilates Architect, on February 15, 2023. Camille has applied for her State of Georgia Certificate of Organization but has not yet received it. We need approval pending receipt of the State license. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Business License for Pilates Architect with the provision that we receive the State Certificate of Organization, seconded by John Kelley and approved unanimously.

**Resolution to Adopt the Young Harris Parks, Recreation and Trail System Plan:** Mayor Gibby explained this plan is an updated plan of the Resolution that was passed in 2019. There are updates on page 4 of the plan written in red which are the only changes to the plan. A copy of the Resolution and the updated plan is attached and incorporated herein by reference. John Kelley made a motion to approve the updated Resolution of the Parks, Recreation and Trail System Plan, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously.

**February Invoice – Marvin Harkins:** Attorney Harkins presented the Council with an invoice for February, 2023 in the amount of $3,904.00. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the invoice, seconded by Donald Keys, and approved unanimously. A copy of the invoice is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Old Business:**

**North Mount Zion Church of God:**

Deb Edwards addressed the Council explaining the packet has a copy of the Minutes of the February 21, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference. She went over the Minutes explaining the biggest problem was the size of the building but she was informed of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act which pretty much does away with zoning. All Commission members were in favor of approving the Special Use Permit. Steve Clark said the Council needs to review the City Tree Plan but that has nothing to do with this Church approval.

The Commission granted approval of the Land Disturbing Permit and the Building Permit per the explanation on the meeting minutes. They had a concern about a visual barrier.

Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously. A copy of the Special Use Permit Application is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Land Disturbing Application: Mayor Gibby explained the fact that since the last meeting she has had a conversation with the NRCS. The City is an issuing authority so we are careful about our soil and streams. Pam at NRCS said she looked over this and has no problems with it. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Land Disturbing Permit, seconded by John Kelley but Steve Clark pointed out the fact that it was approved at the last meeting pending State Approval. A copy of the Land Disturbing Permit and the NRCS approval is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Building Permit: Mayor Gibby said we have everything we need. The tree plan has been turned in and Reid and his company has looked at it. DOT has given permit for utilities. There is in writing that you are going to get a permit from the DOT for a commercial road but she has not received it yet. Reid Dyer said the DOT has approved the deceleration , acceleration and everything has been approved. They have approved everything but the striping and he has checked that online and is waiting for final approval. Donald Keys made a motion to approve the North Mount Zion Church of God Building Permit, seconded by John Kelley and approved unanimously. A copy of the Building Permit Application is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Deb Edwards said the Planning Commission really needs a Land Use Map. Attorney Harkins said the City Council adopted a plan in 2018 with the County which is a future plan or a guide to what you want. It is a planning tool. Hal Chitwood said he works with the Regional Commission to develop a comprehensive regional plan.

Mayor Gibby welcomed the Church to the community. She said there were rumors that she did not want the Church in Young Harris. Last year when Reid Dyer first submitted the plans we could not get in touch with anyone representing the Church. She told the Council in September that we were not able to get anyone from the Church to respond to our requests for information. A copy of the Minutes of the September 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes is attached and incorporated stating that fact. She said it is not our job to hunt you down. We want to be good partners. We want you to be good partners. If you have any questions please call me. If you have questions about the water system call Dean. We ask this of the College and everyone else.

Ryan Wilson, Associate Pastor of Mount Zion Church of God, thanked the Council and the City and said they look forward to being a part of the Community. They want to be great partners and neighbors. He lives in Young Harris and they want to add value to the community. He thanked the Mayor again.

Mayor Gibby told the Church they have to deal with Dean Stanley on soil and erosion so they should call him tomorrow.

**Council Update:** Steve Clark said the SCADA system is way old and needs to be updated. This is the software that tells the pumps and tanks when to pump water. Dean is setting up a meeting with the SCADA software people.

**Economic Development:**

Mayor Gibby pointed out a Main Street Director Report in the packets. Rosemary Royston went to government classes last week in Athens and this week has a prior commitment that she made before she started working for the City. Mayor Gibby expects a report from Rosemary every month.

Mayor Gibby said that she and Rosemary have put together a survey which will come to you on email and is on Facebook. It is for anyone who lives or works in the valley. She has already received 55 responses. We are trying to get a baseline on some information so we can get started on Main Street. We also need a Main Street Board. Rosemary is drafting By-Laws. Let Mayor Gibby know if you have suggestions for this board.

Denise McKay explained the Board is simply an advisory committee. She passed out an annual report to the Council Members, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

John Kelley said Denise was reported in the paper as saying Young Harris was going to have a dog park. He asked where it was going to be. He said the Council has not decided. It is in the Placemaking Committee. He said he would not have picked the location that the committee has discused which is near where kids are playing and it is near a creek. Denise said she has not read the article. He told her that she needs to make sure it has gone through the proper processes before it is advertised. Mayor Gibby told John berating people in public is not good. John said he is not berating Denise – he appreciates all the work she does. He thinks it is important to have discussion right here to be transparent. He thought maybe another location had been decided on because it is still in Placemaking which means it is a thought, an idea, that needs further edification, evaluation, and discussion so we can see if it fits into our plan. Mayor Gibby said as soon as they are ready they know they have to come and talk to the Council.

**Attorney’s Report:**  Attorney Harkins said there are two bids open. One is a request for resumes for engineering services. The bid closes on March 17. There will be a selection committee to decide which ones they like which will be reported to the Council at the April Council Meeting. There needs to be 2 or 3 committee members and they do not have to be Council Members. He asked the Council to appoint committee members before the next meeting.

The second is the Timberline Project where they had a pre-bid meeting last Tuesday and only one contractor came and another has expressed interest. The bid closes March 31 at 3:00 PM and the bids will be presented at the April Council Meeting. He told Bo the City would like to use the parking area at the bottom of Timberline as a lay down area for construction equipment but he will talk to Bo at a later date about that.

Attorney has been working on a flow chart for Building Permits but he is going to halt that because it may be superceded in light of the Hal Chitwood presentation.

Steve Clark said we could talk about who would be on the Selection Committee at the Administrative Committee Meeting on March 21.

Mayor Gibby said the Council needs to go into Closed Session to talk about real estate.

John Kelley made a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss real estate seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. While in Closed Session the Council authorized the Mayor to sign an affidavit stating that the only issue discussed was real estate. A copy of the affidavit is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Matt Miller made a motion to adjourn Closed Session and return to open session, seconded by Terry Ingram, and approved unanimously. In Open Session there was no discussion so Donald Keys made a motion to adjourn Open Session, seconded by John Kelley and approved unanimously.

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Andrea C. Gibby, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nicolette Wade, City Clerk