

Approved by the City Council November 2, 2021

City of Young Harris

Regular Monthly Meeting

October 5, 2021

The Young Harris City Council met Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 7:15 PM following the Public Hearing regarding changes in the Master Fee Schedule. Those present for the meeting were the Mayor: Andrea Gibby; City Attorney: Marvin Harkins; City Council Members: Matt Miller, Steve Clark, Terry Ingram, Donald Keys and John Kelley; City Clerk: Nicolette Wade; Water Superintendent: Gary Willer; Finance Officer: Lisa Hoyle; Shawn Jarrard of the Towns County Herald; Michael Courey of the Towns County Civic Association; Matthew George of the YHC SGA, and various members of the community.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Gibby called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM stating there was a quorum present.

**Agenda:** Mayor Gibby added Michael Courey and Denise McKay to the Agenda. Donald Keys made a motion to approve the Agenda with the two additions, seconded by John Kelley and approved unanimously. A copy of the corrected Agenda is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting, September 14, 2021 – 7:00 PM:** John Kelley made a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 14, 2021 Council Meeting, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the Minutes is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Financial Report:** Lisa Hoyle told the Council they should have three documents – September Financial Report, Professional Services and Proposed Budget Calendar. She went over the September report page by page. The City received \$23,268.22 in local option sales tax for the month of July. For General Fund September balance is \$2923.61 and for the year \$33,095.61. Page 9 is the ARPA money and there has been no action on that account. It probably won't be spent this year and will be moved into a deferred account for next year. SPLOST is paid up through June. John Kelley said our repairs and maintenance for water are already above budget. Lisa noted the balance of the wastewater plant loan is \$4.4 million. Revenue for Wastewater was higher in September at \$51,245.82. John Kelley asked if the \$8700 paid for TWA to manage the plant was more than before when we had a plant operator. Mayor Gibby said it is about the same as what we paid TWA previously plus the salary and benefits of the plant operator within \$1500. A copy of the Financial Report and proposed budget is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Lisa is leaving the City for another job but she has set up the proposed budget for the Council. She thanked the Council for the opportunity to work in Young Harris and said she has enjoyed it. John told Lisa she has done an outstanding job. Mayor Gibby said Lisa was a delight to work with and has helped us out tremendously. Steve Clark made a motion to approve the Financial Reports, seconded by Matt Miller, and approved unanimously.

**Engineer Report:** Mayor Gibby said there is no engineering report but we have used engineering extensively. Hayes James has completed the preliminary and is now in the final stage of revision of the

ramp design at Cupid Falls. We have preliminary EPD approval but we have to get variances. Funding is coming from the DNR.

**Michael Courey** announced a public forum Monday, October 11, at the Recreation Center at 6:00 PM and asked people to come and support the students as they present information regarding drugs and drug abuse.

**Cable's Gallery:** Dana Cable has applied for a business license for an art gallery at 1055 Main Street. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Application for a Business License for Cable's Gallery, seconded by John Kelley and approved unanimously. A copy of the Application is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Change November Council Meeting back to November 2:** Matt Miller made a motion to move the Regular Monthly Council Meeting back to November 2 instead of November 9 since there will be no election in the City. The motion was seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously.

**Servline:** Nicolette told Council when they approved the contract with Servline in 2019 Servline said they would not cover dripping/leaking faucets or running toilets/commodos unless the charge to the customer was larger than quoted. We have been getting quite a few denials for these types of leaks especially in the apartments where maintenance people cannot keep everything done. A customer was denied a leaking toilet claim and he called Donald Keys. Donald called Nicolette and said he did not think that was fair. Nicolette contacted Julie Ward at the insurance company and asked how much more it would cost and she said that they will cover it at no extra charge. Nicolette asked the Council to approve this adding this coverage at no charge to the city or the customers. John Kelley made a motion to approve these types of coverage as long as there is absolute confirmation of no additional charge, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously. A copy of the emails to Julie Ward at Servline where Nicolette asked the cost of adding dripping toilets and faucets to our contract is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Property Tax Millage Rate:** Mayor Gibby said the Millage Rate 5 year History has been appropriately advertised as required by law. Lisa explained the assessed value only increased slightly but the difference is only \$466. Matt Miller made a motion to change the millage rate from 2.479 in 2020 to 2.346 in 2021, seconded by Donald Keys, and approved unanimously. A copy of the Millage Rate Five Year History is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**First Reading of the Ordinance Imposing Fees on Insurance Companies:** Attorney Harkins explained that because the population in Young Harris increased from 899 to 1098 State Law allows the city to collect \$25 from each insurance company that conducts business inside the City of Young Harris. The previous amount was \$15. A letter from Georgia Municipal Association explaining the change including a sample ordinance is attached and incorporated herein along with a copy of the new ordinance.

**First Reading of the Building Inspector Ordinance:** Attorney Harkins explained that this is based on the Service Delivery Agreement between the City and Towns County. Previously Towns County conducted building inspections in the City but effective November 1 the City will be conducting their own inspections. The fees to be charged for inspection are included in the revised Fee Schedule. A copy of the Ordinance is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Invoice for Elan City Solar Radar Speed Sign:** Mayor Gibby explained someone hit and destroyed the radar speed sign on the Blairsville side of town. The Council was asked to approve a replacement sign which can be paid by LMIG funds. Dr. Kelley said the location needs to be analyzed because of low sunlight which prevents the sign from working correctly. John Kelley made a motion to approve the purchase of a replacement sign at a cost of \$3450.00, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the invoice is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Resolution to Approve DNR Grant:** Mayor Gibby is writing a DNR grant for the new park. It is a pre-application and she needs a resolution for her to move forward. Attorney Harkins asked that the Council authorize the City Attorney to draft a resolution authorizing the Mayor to apply for this grant. John Kelley made the motion as requested by Attorney Harkins, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously.

**City Creek Crossing:** John Kelley explained that heavy rain washed out the bridge on Corn Creek and farmland and homes that had never flooded before were sitting in water. The bridge from David Sellers house to his guest house washed out. It went down to the YHC ballfields and jammed up the Creek and did a lot of damage to Reggie Sprinkles basement. David is designing a bridge that is 36 inches higher. John said the City needs to have some minimum standard for bridges and crossing on City waterways. Mayor Gibby said we are currently reviewing the Zoning Ordinance so now is a good time to include those standards. Attorney Harkins said he had checked the standards and the bridge was too small to require a building permit.

**Oak Street Water Runoff:** John Kelley said during the same heavy rain water Oak Street was a spillway. The culverts were full and the drain pipes stopped up so water was standing in the middle of the road. A lot of water is going down the ditch line toward the ballfields and the culvert at David Seller's is too small and is stopped up. The culvert needs to be replaced with a new larger culvert at his private driveway or the culvert needs to be removed or it will erode under the street or at the headwalls of the bridge. Terry Ingram said the canes have always been a problem and John agreed with that and said they need to be taken down.

**Denise McKay:** Denise said they are going to meet Friday morning and are going to schedule painting of the second crosswalk. She said the Youth Leadership Program is making progress. Also Young Harris is one of 5 cities in the State working with the Georgia Community Housing Program to work on the lack of affordable housing in the community. Steve Clark explained people who work here cannot afford a place to live because it is a retirement area with expensive housing.

**Second Reading of the Ordinance Revising the Master Fee Schedule:** Mayor Gibby said 2 years ago the City started planning. Why did it take so long? There is a road from Blairsville and a bypass that we had to wait and see where it was going. After we found out the DOT plans we started planning. In June 2019 the Council approved the plans. In September 2019 they added an additional parks, trails, and recreation plan. In 2020 Denise worked with Georgia Regional Commission and presented an Economic Development Plan approved by Towns County, Hiwassee, and Young Harris. This year we have also been working on a Comprehensive Plan which in addition to the plans we have has also taken in survey results from the entire County. Going back 10 years we looked at our water system and we had a failing well and we replaced all our water system in 2010 – 2011. We looked at and increased our sewer plant capacity with a loan of \$5 million. We are ready for growth because we can serve customers who come

into the valley. Mayor Gibby said she believes in planning and now we are in the growing our business here.

Mayor Gibby explained late fees that were caused by lost in the mail payments were always reimbursed. Nicolette always asks the Mayor about problems with bills and a decision is made. Secondly we pay more to engineers than the Council would like to. We want people to come to our meetings and participate in our discussions. We have been discussing the booster pump surcharge for some time.

John Kelley thanked everybody for their questions – they were excellent question most of which we have asked to our engineer.

Attorney Harkins conducted the Second Reading of the Master Fee Schedule Ordinance: The sewer and water fund are stand-alone funds, separate and apart from any other purpose. The Water Sewer Ordinance says if you have problems with a bill there is a dispute process. The current City website is not the best but we are working on a new site with better information for the public.

John Kelley explained how the \$26 fee was decided. He said they analyzed the cost associated with everybody on the booster pumps and came up with a number that would break even – there is not profit in it.

Matt Miller explained problems with booster pumps are in the thousands of dollars. John said if the number is higher than it needs to be we will reduce the amount.

Mayor Gibby said fees are based on inside or outside the city limits and all other cities charge a fee for above the booster pump.

Steve Clark explained the fact that the Timberline Pump cost to fix the problems there is \$150,000. This problem has been an ongoing problem for some time. Robert Grove said the whole city should bear the burden not just a section of people.

Wayman Durrence stated that he should not have to pay for water when he is in Florida 6 months of the year. He turns his water off at the meter when he leaves town. Matt Miller said the idea behind the minimum bills is the cost of the tanks, the cost to maintain the lines, the debt service to have water. That is there whether you are using it or not. That does not go down whether you are there or not. We maintain the ability to give you that service whether you are there or not.

Steve Clark made a motion to approve the Ordinance Revising the Master Fee Schedule Ordinance, seconded by Matt Miller, and approved unanimously. A copy of the Ordinance is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Water/Maintenance Report:** Gary Willer said they are getting ready to work on Christmas lights. They are getting power to the Stephens Road booster pump that was hit by lightning.

**Website:** Mayor Gibby said we hope to have a draft design of the new website next week

**Matthew George** of the Young Harris College SGA introduced himself to the Council. He is a junior at YHC and is the student representative to the Council from YHC.

The Council adjourned temporarily to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel, legal, and real estate issues. While in Closed Session the Council authorized the Mayor to sign an affidavit stating that the only

Regular Monthly City Council Meeting – October 5, 2021

issues discussed were personnel, legal, and real estate. A copy of the affidavit is attached and incorporated herein by reference. Matt Miller made a motion to adjourn the Closed Session and return to Open Session, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously.

Matt Miller made a motion to accept a bid and concept for the Kaiser Dean Property as presented, seconded by Donald Keys, and approved by Matt Miller, Terry Ingram, Donald Keys, and Steve Clark with John Kelley abstaining from the vote.

Matt Miller made a motion to pursue annexation and rezoning of the old fire station, seconded by Donald Keys, and approved by Matt Miller, Terry Ingram, Donald Keys, and Steve Clark with John Kelley abstaining from the vote.

Matt Miller made a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting, seconded by Donald Keys, and approved unanimously.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea Gibby, Mayor

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

Nicolette Wade, City Clerk