Approved by the City Council May 3, 2022

Regular Monthly Meeting

April 5, 2022

The Young Harris City Council met Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 7:00 PM for the Regular Monthly Meeting. Those present for the meeting were the Mayor: Andrea Gibby; City Attorney: Marvin Harkins; City Council Members: Matt Miller, Steve Clark, and Terry Ingram; City Clerk: Nicolette Wade; Public Works Supervisor Dean Stanley; Brittany Holbrooks of the Towns County Herald; Economic Development Director: Denise McKay; Vice President of Finance and Operations at Young Harris College: Bo Wright; Michael Courey of the Towns County Civic Association; and Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Gibby called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. She welcomed everyone to the meeting stating there was a quorum present. She said John Kelley was at a golf tournament and Donald Keys also was not attending because of a sick family member.

**Agenda:** Mayor Gibby asked the Council to look over the Agenda and asked if anyone had anything to add. She asked Nicolette to add Economic Development as a regular monthly item under Committee Reports and before Council Updates. Matt Miller asked to speak about the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Agenda with the above mentioned changes, seconded by Terry Ingram and approved unanimously. A copy of the revised Agenda is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting – March 1, 2022 – 7:00 PM:**  Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 1 Regular Monthly Meeting as presented, seconded by Steve Clark and approved unanimously. A copy of the Minutes is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of the Minutes of Called Meeting – Cupid Falls Modification – March 15, 2022 – 6:30 PM:** Steve Clark made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Called Meeting March 15 as presented, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the Minutes is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Appearances: Michael Courey:** Michael Courey has hiked in many different areas and has an understanding of nature which is beautiful. All the walking he has done has not been to get to a destination. We have here an opportunity to give people a trip, not a destination. When he and his wife go to the falls it was always to walk. He obtained a grant a couple of years ago to help clean up that area and people went over there and cleaned up the walkway so it would look good. The proposed walkway would help people of his age which is 74. People go there for the walk and the longer you can make the trip the better. The proposed decking goes down and then it goes up. That is the good part that it takes a while to go down and then up. If you have a walking area to and from it that is the beauty of it. People like his wife who no longer has the agility to walk in that area could walk on the decking so he asked the Council to please keep that in mind when you say we don’t want it because it is too long and you have to go down and up.

**Financial Report:** Mayor Gibby explained that Ana had a death in the family last week and is not here. She asked if anyone came and talked with Ana and no one had. She asked that they take time to meet with her and discuss what they want to be in the Financial Reports.

**Cupid Falls Ramp:** Mayor Gibby spoke with Lindsey Brown, the DNR grant representative. Lindsey said the only way we got the grant and scored as high as we did was because it gave access to the falls from upper to lower. Lindsey is willing to come up and have a conversation and figure out a way to save the grant.

**Timberline Booster Pump:** Steve Clark said he talked with John who was under the impression that we would have plans by now. Hayes-James has not given us a proposal and we are no further along than we were last year. Mayor Gibby said Steve, John and Attorney Harkins were given permission by the Council to go forward and talk to Hayes-James. John was under the impression that he gave Mark permission to go forward with the proposal. Per Steve there is a communication problem on everything lately. Steve wants to go back with the proposal for a bid again with another round of demand engineering services. We are always waiting on a proposal from Hayes-James. Attorney Harkins said part of it is that we had to wait on the EMC Board meeting and we don’t have a specific location for the easement. **(John Kelley wanted to clarify as a point of reference in the May 3 meeting before approving the Minutes that there was not delay and the project for design regarding the easement was immediately turned over to Hayes-James the day after the EMC Board Meeting which was less than two weeks after the Council met onsite**) Steve said the EMC approval was somewhat fluid and you could move it 5 or 10 feet this way or that. We have already paid phase one of the proposal from Hayes-James. Mayor Gibby said she was not involved and the Council had permission to go forward as she does not know what to do but she is happy to get involved if the Council wants her to. Steve said there is the same scenario regarding the sewer line replacement.

**Sewer Line Replacement:**  Steve said it was his understanding that Marvin had been authorized to get whatever language he needs from Reid to put an advertisement for phase one which is that piece of sewer below the apartments and it has gone nowhere. Then he received a proposal for $13,000 from Hayes-James to basically review plans for a study that they did. Steve’s frustration is that we are not getting anything done – we just have meetings and talk about proposals. Steve talked to Reid two weeks ago and he said he understood. Mayor Gibby repeated her offer to get involved but the Council has to tell her what she needs to do.

Steve has given something to Attorney Harkins to use to draw up a bid advertisement. He is going to work next on Maple Street sewer near the Senior Housing. Mayor Gibby asked if the Council was comfortable with Steve engineering this.

Attorney Harkins said the motion from last month was Steve would see if we had enough money to cover the cost of sewer replacement. The other motion regarding Timberline was to put it out to bid. He had a conversation with Reid before Steve’s conversation about the sewer line project and he said he was not comfortable with the technical specs and was going to talk to Mark or someone else and was waiting on their information. His assumption was that he was going to give him information for a bid package.

Terry Ingram asked why there is a lack of communication and what the hold-up is. Mayor Gibby said she would ask.

Matt Miller said he thinks the Council has been pretty clear as to what they want done. We have talked to them for months and there is no proposal and the study they did was not cheap but they seem to just push it down the road.

Steve asked if we still have a contract with Turnipseed. Mayor Gibby said yes. Steve asked if everyone was comfortable with Attorney Harkins taking the language he gave him for the first phase and sending it to Turnipseed and asking them if that would suffice for an advertisement. This has been a problem for 8 years and it needs to be fixed because we are close to an EPD disaster. Mayor Gibby said she agrees it needs to be fixed.

Mayor Gibby asked the Council if they want this sent to Lamar at Turnipseed. Matt said we need a response but it is hard to get something done when you talk to someone and two weeks later there is no response. When you start all over again it will be even longer.

Attorney Harkins explained with the High Street paving the contractors got together after the bid and were able to look at it and were able to bid based on apples to apples. He thinks the same thing can be done with rehabbing the sewer lines. He feels confident with moving the bid process forward.

Mayor Gibby asked Dean Stanley to look at this, talk to Steve, and give his response to the sewer line replacement at a later date.

Matt Miller made a motion to advertise for a bid to renovate the sewer lines, seconded by Terry Ingram, and approved unanimously.

Steve said there is a trunk line from School Street down which is the worst. It is pieced together with three different pipe sizes and materials. It has a number of sags in it. It needs a complete rehab and is the most difficult and expensive and is causing the most problems. It is manhole to manhole. You need to do the thing that is least intrusive and there is nothing to design. He wants the first one out to bid and introduce the second one to the contractors and get some opinions on it. Find out from the people who do this for a living if it is more feasible to lay parallel lines or to replace the line that is there.

The Maple Street problem is going to be fairly simple. The one on the Post Office side has a concrete lid sitting on top of it. They have to remove it with a track hoe. The lid needs to be replaced. We think the pipe under the road is ok but it makes a ninety degree turn under the senior housing where it gets clogged up and it backs up and comes up through the manhole. Where it turns they need to build what is called a “doghouse manhole”. This is a construction issue.

Steve’s proposal is to get Marvin the language on Maple Street about replacing the concrete top and building a “Doghouse Manhole”. The proposal for School Street is to wait until we get the proposal on the Enota stuff so we can talk to the contractors about the best way to rehab the lines.

Matt said the plan of action sounds good to him and Terry agreed.

The discussion returned to Timberline. No one knew if John had talked to Hayes-James again recently. Matt said he would like to hear what John has done. Steve said we are still waiting on a proposal and it will be September or October before we get it.

Attorney Harkins read an email from Hayes-James and he said it sounds like they are working on the Timberline proposal. Steve said he will call Mark in the morning. Matt said we need to get them on some kind of time commitment.

Mayor Gibby said she sent in a $3 million package to Senator Warnocks Office and Mark took time to help give them a timeline for Timberline and the College Farm project. The last time they presented something it did not have a timeline and they told us it had to be in there.

**YHC Building Demolition from Planning Commission:** The building demolition was talked about in detail at the last meeting. It was sent to the Planning Commission and has their approval. Bo Wright said the only thing different was the day it started which is changed from May 9 to May 21. Bo is working with Dean to make sure water and sewer lines to the buildings are disconnected. Mayor Gibby said the College is over prepared and will advertise, close streets, take care of any safety issues. A copy of the Planning Commission Report is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Mueller Laptop Quote:** Mayor Gibby explained the automatic meter readings are going out. Mueller representatives will be at the next meeting to give us a proposal on assistance with meter reading. The Council needs to consider purchasing a new laptop for reading the meters because the current laptop is old and is not working properly. The quotation on the laptop is $3500. A copy of the quotation is attached and incorporated herein by reference. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the purchase of the new meter reading laptop a cost of $3500, seconded by Terry Ingram, and approved unanimously.

Mayor Gibby said we cannot get new meters for 6 months to a year. Mueller reps have been invited to come to the next meeting and give us a proposal for helping out with meter readings.

**Zoning Map:** Attorney Harkins explained the Fire Station and the Kaiser Dean property were annexed into the City so we needed a new Zoning Map which we have received. A report has to go to the EPA and the Census when you complete an annexation. He also found that the annexation across from the Sewer Plant was not reported to the EPA so that has to be corrected. However the map will have to be redone since he found out there is a piece of property owned by Eddy Corn that someone is purchasing and they want to be annexed to the City. In 1991 sixty feet of the Corn property was annexed but it has never been reflected on our Zoning Map. The sale of the Kaiser Dean and Fire House property will be closed sometime in the next 30 to 35 days. There is also property in front of the EMC that is owned by the City. There will have to be a resolution when the new map is received. Matt explained the City ownership was structured on both sides for City Services and for future annexation.

**GIRMA Invoice:** The GIRMA Invoice for our property insurance for 2022 through 2023 is $24,522. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the GIRMA invoice, seconded by Steve Clark, and approved unanimously. A copy of the invoice and accompanying information regarding coverage is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Mayor Gibby asked Dean Stanley about the two new City Workers. He said they are learning and scheduling classes. Mayor Gibby said Dean is doing a great job of training which takes a long time. Michael is scheduling testing.

**Economic Development:** Denise McKay said we are trying to make a pre-application to Appalachian Regional Commission for $600,000 to $700,000. They have to allocate it by May 31. She handed the Council complete information as to how the funds would be used and explained it to the Council. A copy of the pre-application information is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Denise also wanted to add sidewalks to connect the park to downtown. Matt explained that the park is in a floodplain and floods often. Denise said when they previously applied for it the environmental group signed on it.

Steve Clark made a motion to approve writing and submitting the pre-application to ARC, seconded by Matt Miller, and approved unanimously.

Denise said we were not accepted into the Main Street program because we do not have staffing. The DCA manages it and they require a person have 20 hours per week to oversee the program. Steve asked if that person could also be a part time City Manager to follow up on meeting decisions and Mayor Gibby said yes but at least 20 hours has to be Main Street work.

Matt Miller made a motion to pursue the Main Street Application, seconded by Steve Clark, and approved unanimously.

**Georgia Initiative for Community Housing:** Matt Miller was excited about the conference he attended regarding low and moderate income housing. There were 21 team members. It was educational and they learned about block grants and the Chip Program. It was about rehabilitation of existing homes, building new housing, and tax grants. If you keep your house for 5 years loans are forgiven. There are ARP funds available for housing for people making $15 an hour. It enables people to move up their standard of living.

**Mayor’s Report:**

Mayor Gibby said the Seafood Festival will be the first weekend in June.

Steve said he would like to find out information about the mill that was at Cupid Falls at one time. Mayor Gibby said three classes at Young Harris College have already compiled that information.

She said we need to thank all the volunteers that are helping us in the City. There were lots of volunteers who helped clean up Cupid Falls including 10 to 15 Young Harris College students.

Mayor Gibby called for a Closed Session Meeting regarding personnel.

**Closed Session:** The Council adjourned temporarily to go into Closed Session to discuss a personnel issue. While in Closed Session the Council authorized the Mayor to sign an affidavit stating that the only issues discussed were personnel issues. A copy of the affidavit is attached and incorporated herein by reference. Matt Miller made a motion to adjourn the Closed Session, seconded by Terry Ingram and approved unanimously.

**Open Session:** Steve Clark made a motion to increase the salary of the Finance Officer as per the Closed Session discussion, seconded by Matt Miller, and approved unanimously.

**Adjournment:** Steve Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Matt Miller, and approved unanimously.

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Andrea Gibby, Mayor

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

Nicolette Wade, City Clerk