**Approved by the City Council July 11, 2023**

**Regular City Council Meeting**

**June 6, 2023**

**6:30 P.M.**

The Young Harris City Council met Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at 6:30 PM for their Regular Monthly Meeting. Present at the meeting were the Mayor: Andrea Gibby; City Attorney: Marvin Harkins; City Clerk: Nicolette Wade; Finance Officer: Ana Hess; City Council Members: Matt Miller, Steve Clark, and Donald Keys; Public Works Supervisor: Dean Stanley; Economic Development Director: Denise McKay; Young Harris College President: Dr. Drew Van Horn; Vice President of Finance and Operations at Young Harris College: Bo Wright; Towns County Herald Staff Writer: Brittany Holbrooks; Towns County Civic Association member: Jim Olson. Also present were several members of the community: Joe Lashley, Tom and Andrea Foster, David Sellers, Matt Logan of Young Harris College, Sherry Ledford of Young Harris Florist, Deanna Ledford of The Cutting Edge, Dana Cable of Cable’s, and Jessica Harris of Hook Owl.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Gibby called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM stating that Terry Ingram and John Kelley were absent but there was a quorum of Council Members present so we could do business. She asked the Council to look over the Agenda for any errors.

**Agenda:** Matt Miller made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, seconded by Steve Clark and approved unanimously. A copy of the Agenda is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting – May 2, 2023 – 6:30 PM:** Steve Clark made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 2 Regular Monthly Meeting as presented, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously. A copy of the Minutes of the May 2 Regular Monthly Meeting is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Financial Report – Ana Hess:** Referring to the April, 2023 Financial Statement Ana said we were where we were expected to be this time of the month. We still do not have the figures from the auditors. The budget numbers will have to be updated by the next meeting to be more accurate. Steve Clark had a question regarding expenditures being higher than budgeted with the revenue side not having been updated. Mayor Gibby explained we will need to do an amended budget. Mayor Gibby thanked Ana for all she had done to update the financials. Steve Clark made a motion to approve the April, 2023 Financial Statement, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the April 2023 Financial Report is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Young Harris Wing House Building Permit for Covered Outdoor Seating:** Taylor Osborn, owner of Young Harris Wing House, explained he wanted to put a pavilion over the picnic tables. The DOT had no problem with it. It can be in-ground or above the ground. He also wants to bring the fence around further so it will be safe. Mayor Gibby said it had gone to the Planning Commission who had approved it without any restrictions. Steve Clark made a motion to approve the cover, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously. A copy of the Building Permit is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Financial Administration Ordinance – Second Reading:** Attorney Harkins explained that under state law public works contracts had to be bid if the cost was above $100,000. The General Assembly had passed a bill to change that amount to $250,000 but Governor Kemp vetoed it. The city can still increase our local requirement from $30,000 to $100,000 which is what the new Ordinance requires. Steve Clark made a motion to approve the new Ordinance with the $100,000 requirement, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the Financial Administration Ordinance is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Zoning Ordinance – Second Reading:** Attorney Harkins explained this Ordinance is a language cleanup to get the local law in compliance with state zoning procedures law. It is the same version as the First Reading in May. Matt Miller made a motion to approve the revised Zoning Ordinance, seconded by Steve Clark, and approved unanimously. A copy of the Zoning Ordinance is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Bureau Veritas Contract and Master Fee Schedule Ordinance and Fee Schedule:** Attorney Harkins explained the contract issue is for building inspections and some code compliance. The City of Young Harris used to use the Towns County inspector but that did not work out. The City of Hiawassee uses Bureau Veritas. The fee schedule was changed according to the recommendations of Bureau Veritas. The fees for permits are based on construction square footage. Mayor Gibby explained this was tabled at the May meeting. Attorney Harkins went over a list of the Scope of Work to be done by Bureau Veritas, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference. Steve Clark made a motion to approve the contract with Bureau Veritas, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. Steve Clark made a motion to table the Master Fee Schedule until July noting that John Kelley has handled this from the beginning and the fees have gone down from what they initially were, seconded by Matt Miller and approved unanimously. A copy of the Master Fee Schedule is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

**Timberline Booster Pump – Bid for Timberline Pump:** Steve Clark asked if the contract with Keck and Wood had been finalized and Attorney Harkins said yes. He gave a summary of the Timberline project which began with discussions of going up and fixing the pump and adding a bladder tank but that did not fix the problem which is getting enough pressure to reach the top of the mountain. The next plan was either 2 pump stations or 1 and they chose one. Again the problem is getting enough pressure at the top of the mountain. We received a quote for $1,000,000 but $700,000 of that is for replacing pipeline. Now the option is to keep the new pump station location with a smaller booster pump and pump from there to the existing pump station. In the existing pump station install a new set of pumps and put a bladder tank at that location with a SCADA system on the bladder tank and the lower pump station. The lower pump station fills up the bladder tank and existing pump station pumps the water from the bladder tank to the top of the mountain. Steve does not know what the pressure is going to be from the two pump stations but this is what Keck and Wood is working on. The other question is whether or not the existing line is sufficient to handle the pressure. This should take down the price in half. He wants to have a Water Sewer Committee Meeting before the next meeting. He will have the report from Corinne Valentine by that time. He will get a proposal from Corinne and Hussey Gay to re-design. It should save us half a million dollars.

**Water Meters:** Dean said the new meters are ordered. They will start shipping them in June and should all be here by October when we can start installing them.

Steve said the SCADA system went down because of the storm and there was only two feet of water in the tanks on Monday. The new equipment is in and it will be installed next week.

Nicolette reported the software side is in process and they are aiming to have it completed by August.

Andrea said she has been meeting with stand-by engineers and they are all willing to help.

**David Sellers:** David asked if the meeting minutes were online and Mayor Gibby said she will train Nicolette how to do that so they will be there in the future.

David explained that he had three properties and the drainage ditch on High Street has not been cleaned in months. Water runs down the street and into his driveway and washes out the gravel. He said the ditch and culverts need to be kept clean. Dean came with the track hoe and cleaned out a culvert on the high side of John Kay’s house. Water runs into the driveway of his business and ponds up. He wants to know why the city cannot clean all the ditches and culverts. If the city can work on the parks the city workers should be able to clean the ditches and culverts. David said this has been a problem for years. Mayor Gibby said she will get Nicolette to write up a work order. She is not sure who owns the land across from him. If it is owned by the college we will have to work with the college.

Dean said the City cannot clean out private driveways.

Attorney Harkins said storm water improvements are huge but if you break it you bought it. If it is on private property his recommendation is not to touch it. If the government maintains it they are liable if anything happens. David said his property is 8 feet in from the ditch. Steve Clark asked David to call him and he will walk the property with him and figure it out. David said he did not mind paying the city to clean it out for him.

David’s next question was regarding the BRMEMC franchise fee. He asked how much money is 4% going to bring in. Attorney Harkins said no one knows. Mayor Gibby said electric bills fluctuate so we do not know. He said some people at the meeting would like to address this. Mayor Gibby said the correct procedure is to call in and ask to be put on the Agenda.

**Water/Wastewater Report:** Dean said the SCADA system will be in and hopefully installed next week. The Water Quality Report is on the website and in the paper.

Mayor Gibby said the Annual Watershed Report is ready if you want to come into City Hall and look at it or make copies.

**Main Street Georgia**: Mayor Gibby said Rosemary is out of town but her report is in your packet.

**Economic Development:** Denise McKay told the Council that we have a good shot at getting a grant for the new park. The donation from Shirley Miller was included. If we make it to phase one then it will go into phase two which is an environmental study. June 19 the Joint Development Authority is meeting with the Department of Community Affairs at the Rec Center who will give information on funding for private business. This meeting will be at 6:30 PM.

**Donation of Land from Shirley Miller:** Attorney Harkins explained Shirley Miller wrote a letter expressing her interest in donating 4.45 acres of land to the City of Young Harris. A copy of the letter and a plat are attached and incorporated herein by reference. It is for park expansion. Attorney Harkins wrote a Resolution for the City to accept the donation, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference. The Resolution also authorizes the Mayor and City Attorney to go ahead and proceed with the closing to transfer that property. Mrs. Miller asked that the City give her a title certificate showing that she has free and clear title to the property to be donate as well as appraisal of the property so she knows the value for tax purposes. Council Member Matt Miller who is Mrs. Miller’s son gave the City Clerk a written statement stating that he will abstain from the vote. Because the vote will be two to nothing it will carry. A copy of this statement is attached and incorporated herein by reference. Steve Clark made a motion to accept the donation graciously, seconded by Donald Keys with Steve Clark and Donald Keys voting in favor of the motion and Matt Miller abstaining to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Steve Clark and Donald Keys both expressed their thankfulness to Matt and his mother. Mayor Gibby also expressed her thanks and said we were grateful to have Mrs. Miller as a resident of the City.

Steve Clark said the Seafood Festival was a great success with some unnecessary challenges, but it worked with Mayor Gibby standing in the middle of Highway 76 directing traffic. He told her they were going to make her the Official Festival Crossing Guard. He handed her a gift bag which included a water pistol and badge. He had told her she could have a badge but not a gun. There was a lot of laughter following this presentation. He said the Mayor and Robin and her crew worked tirelessly on the Festival which is a good thing for the community and brings in a lot of tax dollars. The Mayor thanked Steve and everyone for their help. Robin and Marge who are promoters of the Festival were present at the meeting and she thanked them for all they did.

Mayor Gibby said the first Tuesday in July falls on July 4 so it needs to be moved to the 11th. Matt Miller made a motion to change the meeting date, seconded by Donald Keys and approved unanimously.

The Council set a Water/Sewer Committee for Tuesday, June 27 at 6:00 PM.

Mayor Gibby asked how many people wanted to speak regarding the franchise fee. There were three people who wanted to talk. Mayor Gibby said they have to be civil because we are a City of Civility and they each have three minutes to speak.

**Dr. Drew Van Horn:** Dr. Van Horn thanked people for showing up. They sent a letter out to the community because a lot of people did not know about the franchise fee. He referenced an article in the paper that the choice is between the franchise fee and raising property taxes. He said he wishes the City Council would reduce the operational budget by eliminating the position of Main Street Director. He wonders why those resources are more important than the college paying for fees for engineering surveys. He wants the Council to revisit the franchise fee to bring forth how the city is going to reduce its budget in the future.

**Matt Logan** is a new coach at Young Harris College: He spoke about what he likes about Young Harris and said the city should not work against the interests of the college.

**Sherry Ledford** of Young Harris Florist: As a business owner Sherry said she thought since the college does not pay property taxes it is only right that they also pay the franchise fee.

Mayor Gibby asked in the future that people who want to be on the Agenda please call and ask to be put on the Agenda. Regarding the Main Street Director she explained It helps the City to have more staff. She also said In the future you will see more of the Main Street Director since it is her job is to help businesses. Since the Mayor’s position is not a full time position Mayor Gibby works a regular job and the Main Street Director has already implemented some things. Our goal as Mayor and City Council is to support small businesses.

Donald Keys made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

 Andrea C. Gibby, Mayor

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

 Nicolette Wade, City Clerk