

**City of Locust Grove
Retreat Minutes
Brasstown Valley Resort
6321 Highway 76
Young Harris, GA 30582
Monday, July 15, 2024 – Wednesday, July 17, 2024**

Members Present:	Staff Present:
Vincent Williams – Mayor Pro Tem	Tim Young – City Manager
Carlos Greer – Councilman	Bert Foster – Assistant City Manager
Keith Boone – Councilman	Misty Spurling – City Clerk
Willie Taylor – Councilman	Jennifer Adkins – Executive Admin Assistant
Rod Shearouse – Councilman	Daunte’ Gibbs – Community Development Director
Rudy Breedlove – Councilman	Jack Rose – Public Works Director
	Derrick Austin – Police Chief
	Colleen Cook – Main Street Director
	Andy Welch – Attorney

Monday, July 15, 2024

Mayor Pro Tem Williams called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Invocation given by Tim Young

Councilman Boone led the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

Pro Tem Williams asked for a motion. Councilman Boone made the motion to approve the agenda.

RESULT	APPROVED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

AGENDA ITEMS –

Current Financial Operations -

1. Downtown Locust Grove “Heart of Locust Grove Downtown redevelopment Plan” –

City Manager Tim Young began by previewing a video from the city of Carmel, Indiana redevelopment plan on the projector screen. Discussion took place about the City of Locust Grove and how we can make walkable, inviting spaces in our downtown development. Andy said small steps will lead the city organically and transform into something big, but the vision is that of the council. Tim said increment financing would be an option for this type of redevelopment. Andy said creating taxable use of the land (with bonds, etc.). Discussion took place about researching what makes the old “new” town work for the city of Suwanee. Andy said if the numbers are not based on market realities the plan would be a failure. Tim previewed an aerial map of the City of Locust Grove and discussion took place about property

(availability) and connectivity from downtown. Jack mentioned property available behind the public works facility on Mose Brown and Tim suggested giving feedback to Daunté so that we can communicate with the developers.

2. City Hall Master Plan (revisited) -

Tim reviewed the findings from the [original] RFP Master Plan and revisit as part of SPLOST V and SPLOST VI to add more parking. We also want to look at creating a pond to enhance stormwater capabilities in the cemetery. We would like to put a notice for RFP for revisiting our master plan and downtown or do separate RFP's. We will include more public input sections as part of this as well.

3. Main Street/DDA Connection –

Andy said the city can't enter into an installment contract and it would be better if we put in the Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) or Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The URA can use property for public services; however, the DDA does not have the same limitations and has public processes that must be followed. There is more versatility in terms of property management with the URA and can engage with and sell to private developers. With the DDA, the city can deed off the property as public space as part of the master plan relative to Warren Holder purchases.

The meeting paused for a break at 10:46 am. The meeting resumed at 11:15am.

4. Transportation Projects/Studies –

- **Peeksville Connector** – Bert said we will have an update at the July 22, 2024, meeting and the plans are expected to be ready for submitting to GDOT by the end of the month. We received GTIB grant and a loan (\$2 million each). The grant will be used for construction purposes. Andy said internally we had formed our outside attorney with an indirect discussion to by Moyes pharmacy. Councilman Greer asked about the idea for connectivity from Peeksville Road to downtown/Highway 42. Tim agreed with the idea and Daunté said that it will add more walkability in the city.

Break for lunch at 11:47 AM, resume at 1:13 PM.

- **Bethlehem Road Interchange** – Tim reviewed the design plan on the overhead screen. Councilman Shearouse asks if a decorative bridge is a possibility to consider. Tim said there will be another PHOH in February and will award P3 in August 2025 with completion expected in 2028. The city will work with them on the design of Colvin Drive connector and the bridge.
- **Bill Gardner Parkway, Phase II** – Tim said the first section from Tanger/Market Place to the interstate is complete. The next phase will be difficult, and discussion took place about specific locations.
- **SR 42 Additional Lane NB with future expansion** – Tim reviewed the options (Alternatives one and two). Staff prefer an alternative one and add eight to ten feet of walking trail to replace the sidewalk (on the westside).

The meeting paused for a break at 2:26 PM, the meeting resumed at 2:52 PM.

- **Downtown Corridor Study** – Tim reviewed the two options and discussion took place.
- **Commercial Vehicle Lane project** – Bert said this project is moving forward slowly. Andy said they are redesigning to extend further at I-675. Tim said they want to ensure that the bridge that crosses extends far enough for any reconstruction of the Bill Gardner Interchange.

5. **Annexation 2024** – Tim reviewed the map on the overhead screen of areas now annexed into the city and the areas in pink that will be on the ballot for voting in November. We will have town hall meetings for SPLOST VI and the annexation. We have been approached by someone to market for us (Mobley and Associates). They would do direct mailing, digital ads, live calls, etc. Councilman Greer asked how many roads are part of this annexation that would need to be repaved. Tim said Locust Road (entire road) and the cost would be \$400,000 per mile to resurface. Councilman Shearouse asked how much LOST will increase if the 15% overage and Tim said this would be approaching 15,000 population so it depends. Councilman Breedlove said his pushback is for us to have held the special election in May would have been \$30,000 but we are willing to push cost for election in November. Tim said it wasn't the cost, it was the time frame, and we would have to organize and hold the election ourselves. Greer asked about the option to hire in house marketing. Also, what can be eliminated to decrease costs to the marketing company. Andy said we could eliminate the live calls and do direct mail.
6. **Comprehensive Plan opportunities (Annexation/New Bethlehem Road)** – Tim reviewed the idea of doing land use changes for commercial use to generate more retail for income. (Hotels, restaurants, gas stations).
7. **SPLOST, T-SPLOST, Development Impact Fees** – Tim said the county was tending to refer to 2020 population estimates and split 67/33. Tim reviewed five options and said 33 percent would be distributed to the cities. The cities would prefer to calculate based on 2023 population estimates. Andy said we need the council to authorize he and Tim to finalize documents with the county on what option the council prefers. Tim said we need to have everything back to the county by July 29, 2024, and reviewed the list that was updated at the June workshop meeting.

Pro Tem Williams asked for a motion to adjourn.

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – MEETING ADJOURNED @ 5:11 PM

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Pro Tem Williams called the meeting to order at 8:37am

Invocation given by Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs.

Councilman Shearouse led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEMS CONTINUED FROM MONDAY-

- **Update on projects (municipal grounds/building improvements/parking expansion)** – Review of aerial pictures of Renewal by Anderson, other developments, subdivisions, and Veteran's Memorial. Discussion on parking expansion at city hall. Discussion on Christmas tree options for this year.

- **Development Impact Fees** –

Henry County approved the fee schedule. No increase in fees since 2003. Discussion on impact fee uses. Bert and Tim to review parks and recreation facilities that we need to add.

Discussion on the difference between development impact fees, and plan review fees (permit fees). Breedlove asked what our impact fees are now. Daunté said the fees are \$1,498.47.

The discussion took place on Parks and Recreations and the SDS share for Henry County Fund and said we need to decide how we want to do this. Tim said he thinks we should do an IGA.

The meeting paused for break at 10:12 AM and resumed at 10:39 AM.

8. FY 2023 Financial Statement –

Tim reviewed the FY 2023 Financial Statement with a review of financial highlights. The General Fund is increasing, and our reserve is falling this year to 56.3 percent. Shearouse asked what contributor is going into our reserve. Tim said we could go six months on our reserves.

9. FY 2024 Budget at a glance -

Tim reviewed the fund balance is increasing, and our revenue sources are not.

Discussion took place on Millage Rate rollback.

Discussion took place on benefit and retirement plans. Tim said we had hired additional staff and with them being added (and their spouse or dependents added) created an increase of 40-70 percent and pensions increased drastically as well. We will adjust this year and be ready for next year. The rule of 80 will catch up in the budget as well from being approved two years ago. Breedlove asked if we would expand and consider offering the rule of 80 to employees (non-PD). Tim said we would have to review but we have had employees ask about it. Tim said the salary study will affect the budget next year as well.

The meeting paused for lunch at 11:56 AM and resumed at 1:06 PM.

10. General Fund operating needs (Elected Officials to Community Development) FY 2025

Main Street – Colleen Cook

Colleen reviewed accreditation and program activity with a review of expenditures for 2023 and 2024. Colleen is requesting a personnel request for an event coordinator. The microbrewer has been put on hold for now. Colleen the DDA outstanding projects including crosswalk art (\$5,000), wayfinding kiosks, and security cameras installed at the train platform. Review of Placemaking on 42 tract easements next to the train platform and the DDA is requesting \$200,000. Councilman Greer asked Colleen if she had an idea on what she would put in that space. Colleen said some type of art or create as a nice space to enjoy. Greer asked Colleen if she had considered removing the vinyl sign and putting a more permanent sign. Colleen said she has considered that for when entering the city limits (a nicer permanent sign).

Colleen gave an update and the HPC Certified Local Government status is under probation now for 2024 due to incorrect minute keeping in 2022. We are still considered to be a Level 1 CLG; however, the HPC is requesting \$10,840 to cover the cost to complete, or we will lose the CLG status.

Colleen said Anna started the cemetery project initially, but she changed positions and then resigned, and the project was left incomplete. We need to send money to match grants regarding the cemetery project for \$10,000. It will include incorporated areas and make the database available to the public. Colleen is requesting \$21,000 in total. Tim said there is \$21,000 in budget in support of this.

Breedlove asked if we could donate the \$200,000 to DDA or if they find potential real estate and then we give them the money. Tim said we need to set limitations and do an IGA.

Tim said the DDA needs to pay(lease) for the property, the infrastructure needs to be done, and we are working on that. If the brewery walks away who will be responsible. We need an agreement between the DDA, and the city and Tim said the sewer line project should begin by the fall and completion by the end of the year. Breedlove said the brewery is waiting on someone to do the food portion of the brewery.

Community Development – Daunté Gibbs

Growth: Daunté said we are seeing a decline down to 4-5% in comparison to the previous year. Daunté reviewed housing and commercial permits increase/decreases, accomplishments, and Regulatory updates/needs were reviewed.

Continental properties update – Daunté said we are waiting to see if they will proceed since the council denied approval of waiving development impact fees. Shearouse said he felt betrayed because we approved the development under PD zoning; with conditions and then they decided not to complete the entire project, only part. Shearouse asked what we can do to prevent this from happening in the future. Daunté said we can add provisions to specify, but the property owner can subdivide into separate parcels. Breedlove asked if we can we modify the conditions to say it all has to be done at one time. Tim said no since a current permit is in process. Daunté gave an update on the Publix grocery store and CRG will turn Andersen Windows site over to Andersen in August. They will not open until next year and will have 900 employees. Rangewater is no longer under development and Daunté reviewed the Impact fee comparison.

The meeting paused for a break at 3:00 PM and resumed at 3:20 PM.

Police Department – Chief Derrick Austin

- The Chief gave a review of state certification and said after three years, the state does a review of policy and procedures.
- Staff update – Chief said they currently have 29 officers and one open position [two non-certified positions and a lieutenant position].
- Henry co tag office – Discussion on security and options for filling that position when applicable.
- The chief reviewed guidelines for police officer retention and said the firing range training facility has been put on hold. We utilize the Department of Corrections facilities and that has been working very well. We will postpone the project until 2025 and do further research.
- Fleet request – Chief said he is requesting four new vehicles (three patrol), (one admin) for 2025. The plan is to keep vehicles on patrol for six years and sell the cars after the seventh year.
- Chief Austin reviewed the disorderly conduct ordinance and said there is conflict with subsection J and said we need to remove that section.
- Update on FY 24 capital items and reviewed FY 2025 requests:
- Fingerprint reader, taser, axon body camera/evidence.com contract renewal, training facility, three patrol cars, one trade vehicle within other department and certified officer positions.
- Other items for consideration: The rule of 80 (age + years of service) for *non-certified* administrative employees and the possibility of a 2.5 percent multiplier.

Councilman Greer asked if we could cite an individual for use of marijuana in the public. Chief Austin said the procedures have changed since now its legal to buy something in Georgia with THC in it, so all their tests are not valid. We don't test it unless discrepancy in court and then we send off to test.

11. Capital Needs – General fund FY 2025 -

Tim reviewed the proposed revenues and expenditure accounts by fund beginning with the General Fund and brief review and discussion on each.

Councilman Boone asked if we could create a new grocery cart ordinance related to any carts that are left in areas and the individual store being responsible to pick them up. Daunté said we can cite through our nuisance ordinance and would not have to create a new separate ordinance.

Discussion took place about the potential of hiring additional Code Enforcement and dividing the city into sections and assigning each code officer to respective areas. Daunté said we are responding to complaints and doing a good job with the one who we have and said he does not see any need to fill that position right now.

Pro Tem Williams asked for a motion to adjourn.

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – MEETING ADJOURNED @ 5:26 PM

Wednesday July 17, 2024 –

Pro Tem Williams called the meeting to order at 8:30am

Invocation given by Assistant City Manager Bert Foster.

Councilman Greer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams asked for a motion to amend the date of the agenda for Wednesday from July 19, 2024, to July 17, 2024. Councilman Breedlove made the motion to amend date and seconded by Councilman Greer. Motion Carried, All in Favor.

21. Day One (Review) -

Councilman Boone asked if it would be beneficial for Tracey or Jennifer to go to Clerks training to keep up certification just to have back up and the consensus was no, and discussion took place.

Discussion took place about the Assistant City Clerk position and Misty responded that the advice from Andy was that Misty could hire an Assistant City Clerk when needed. Pro Tem Williams asked about Markeya potentially doing training. Misty said her goal was to consider sending Markeya at some point after she gets more acquainted with her position since she’s only been in her position since January.

Tim gave a review of fund/accounts by department. Discussion took place about the Street (4210) account and maybe a F-450 trade in. Jack said the F-450 would be 16,000 to repair. Councilman Greer asked what would be the cost to replace? Jack said \$60,000. Tim said \$90,000 is the holdover from last year in the budget and may have to add emergency funds of the amount to replace that truck.

The lift at the shop needs an upgrade/replacement and Jack will discuss it with Austin for review.

Councilman Boone made a comment with work comp increasing, do we need more safety training? Chief Austin said yes, driver simulator training is planned for all city employees. Will give update on when we can schedule.

Note to add account for HPC – Historic Resources Survey/Cemetery and account, Investment to the DDA/Economic Development.

The meeting paused for a break at 10:06 AM and resumed at 10:20 AM.

Development Impact Fees will be used for the police dept admin office.

Pipe at Skyland Dam – Request a quote on same work for slip lining. Tim asked Jack to contact Henry County Stormwater for suggestions on who to contact for a quote.

Jack to work on grease management and option to purchase truck for pumping and research fees for disposing or just keep Lee Septic as a vendor for that service.

Credit card fees -initiate convenience fee. (Tyler payment)

Tim mentioned the sanitation contract and asked the council if they wanted us to go out on RFP for a new company. Someone asked Tim to ask Waste Management or other company (if applicable) if they can do bulk pick up and take the responsibility away from our guys along with recycling. Councilman Boone said we need to charge for bulk pickup regardless. Tim said Bert will oversee this and possibly do a minimum charge for chipping service.

Councilman Breedlove made a comment about receiving agenda packets on Friday and asked if there is any way to get sooner.

Tim said each department submits items to Misty by Wednesday evening prior to the upcoming meeting. Councilman Greer and Councilman Breedlove said we need a deadline for items to be to Misty for assembling packets and after the agenda is posted there should be no amendments to allow for thorough review.

Suggestion to have the agenda ready by Tuesday by 5pm and packet deadline pickup by 5. If items/requests come after the agenda is final it will be amended at the meeting and added or wait until the next meeting. Tim said we could consider a postbox out at city hall for pick up after hours.

Councilman Greer asked about key access and who is the key holder.

Councilman Breedlove made a comment about city tax and Tim will get with Andy about details. Also, finalize the Audio/visual in the courtroom.

Shearouse asked, “can we not do this budget without a tax increase”? Tim said no, we are diving into our reserve already this year and we dipped into it last year as well. We will still dip into it even with a tax increase. Tim said we will know what homestead exemptions are in April next year [for determination of the final millage rate].

Greer asked if a person is terminated with Locust Grove, do they have to file an appeal with the Superior Court of Henry County as a next course of action for a wrongful dismissal.

Pro Tem Williams asked how the policy came in place that it wouldn't have to be appealed to the council. Boone said the policy has been that way for years. The policy should be that the council has the right to choose if they want to hear it.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams asked for a motion to adjourn.

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – MEETING ADJOURNED @ 1:04PM

Notes taken by:

Misty Spurling, City Clerk