



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
APRIL 13, 2020 - 7:00 PM  
109 SOUTH KING STREET  
DEPOT COMMUNITY ROOM**

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: James F. Palmer, Mayor  
George R. Crowley, Mayor Pro Tem  
Ray Mitchell Denmon, Councilman  
Al Edwards, Councilman  
Jackie Palazzolo, Councilwoman

ALSO: Paul Worley, City Administrator; Larry Vickery, Utilities Administrator; Sharon Nelson, City Clerk; George Govignon, City Attorney; and Tony Pyle, Police Chief.

1. **Council Meeting Called to Order**

**Welcome**

Mayor Palmer called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

**Invocation**

Mayor Palmer gave the invocation.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Palmer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

3. **Amendment or Approval of Proposed Agenda**

Mayor Pro Tem Crowley made a motion to approve the April 13, 2020 agenda as presented. Councilman Denmon gave a second with all voting aye. Motion approved.

4. **Amendment or Approval of Minutes**

Councilman Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes of the City Council meeting of March 23, 2020. Councilwoman Palazzolo gave a second with all voting aye. Motion approved.

5. **Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Palmer stated that he would like to remind the public that Georgia Governor Brian Kemp announced the extension of the Statewide Shelter in Place Executive Order through

April 30, 2020 with all existing requirements in the original Order carried forward, due to the ongoing challenges we face from the impact of COVID-19. Also, the Public Health State of Emergency was extended to May 13, 2020.

6. **Council Comments**

Councilman Edwards made a motion to dismiss the reading of March work reports and include them in the minutes for those wishing to review them. Councilman Denmon gave a second with all voting aye. Motion approved.

A. Councilwoman Palazzolo submitted March reports as follows:

1) **Water and Sewer Operations**

**Water Treatment Plant**

- Total gallons withdrawn: 316,410,000
- Daily average: 10,206,774
- Wells: 0
- Big Springs: 126,460,000
- % produced by Brittany Drive: 39.9%
  - Brittany Dr. daily production to capacity: 34.57%
  - Mauldin Rd. daily production to capacity: 38.29%
  - Rainfall for November – 4.43”

**Waste Water Treatment Plant**

- Treated a daily average of 10.186 MGD, with an average BOD effluent of 3, average suspended effluent of 11, and an average COD of 56.

**Water Distribution & Wastewater Collection**

- 274 work orders completed, 19 new water connections, 18 water service leaks repaired, 10 water main leaks repaired, 148 meter changes, 55 utility locates called in for work orders, 540 utility locates responses.
- 2,350 feet of Sanitary Sewer Services TV inspected, 375 utility locates completed, 6,500 feet sanitary sewer lines cleaned, 8 new sewer connections installed, 6 sanitary sewer services repaired.

2) **Water and Sewer Construction**

- As part of the new NPDES requirements, steps are underway to meet the storm water segment of the Watershed Protection Plan. EPD notified us on April 17<sup>th</sup> that our Section 319 Grant for Lynn Creek has been awarded. Project has started and we are in the design and planning phase of several tasks. These tasks also involve several local organizations that are volunteering time and/or resources.
- The two inch galvanized line replacement continues utilizing city forces.
- S.R. 156 Water Main Relocation (GDOT/ RR Bridge Replacement @ Ranger) – New Casing and Carrier Pipe has been installed on bridge and tested. Contractor working on waterline segment that will tie into the intersection of Hwy 411
- Ranger 12” Water Transmission Main –This project is under construction. Approximately 99% complete.

- New 2.0 Million Gallon Tank on Pittman Road – Project is 100% complete. Waiting on Transmission Main Project completion to put tank in service.
- Peters Street Phase II Water and Sewer Relocations – Water relocation is approximately 98% complete. Sewer relocation is 100% complete.
- Hwy 41 South Sewer Extension – Contractor continues to work as weather permits. Project approximately 85% complete.
- Georgia Cumberland Academy Force Main & Lifts Station Project- The City received bids for the force main portion of the project on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Bids are being evaluated by Engineering, and a contractor recommendation has not be issued yet.

#### **Water & Sewer Projects in Development**

- North Wall Street and Redbud Road Intersection improvements
- S.R. 136 Water Main Relocation for new Bridges at the Coosawattee River.
- Brittany Drive Standby Generator Grant Submittal
- South Interceptor Flow Study
- Utility Relocation for GDOT roadway improvements at 41 @ Redbud Road

#### **Projects in Engineering Conceptual Design**

##### **Sewer**

- Blackwood Creek Trunk Sewer Replacement
- Yarborough Street Replacement Sewer
- Louise Ave., Cherry St., and Florence Ave. Sewer Replacement
- Sewer Main relocation for the airport project.
- Old Fairmount Hwy Sewer Extension
- Future extensions of the current Hwy 41 South Sewer Project
- Barrett Road Sewer Replacement

##### **Water**

- Bellwood Road Water Transmission Main
- Reeves Station Water Main (replacing existing 6" C. I. with an 8")
- Second Interconnect with Pickens County
- GDOT SR 156/Salacoa Creek Bridges. Scheduled for 2020
- SR 225 8" water main river crossing

### **3) Library**

- There are 11,663 library card holders, 0 library visitors, and 543 total circulation.
- There were 0 story time attendance, 65 adult program attendance, 21 new users, 611 e-books, 800 audio books, 0computer logins, and 20,422 Facebook visits.

B. Councilman Edwards submitted March reports as follows:

1) **Police Department**

- Made 236 cases with 13 DUI's
- Fines collected by Municipal Court - \$36,750
- Issued 300 warnings
- Investigated 45 highway accidents, 23 private property accidents
- Lethal Weapon Encounter - 4
- Obstruction -2
- Alarms - 189
- Miles patrolled: 45,754

2) **Municipal Court**

- Total Court cases- 236
- Court cases dropped- 61
- Number of Bond forfeitures- 137
- Number of Probation cases- 13
- Failure to appear- 36
- Subpoenas served- 4

3) **Fire Department**

**Fire Suppression Division**

140 Total reported calls for service for the Suppression Division

**Dispatched Calls**

- 2 Fire Incidents (\$2,000.00 in Estimated Fire damage)
- 1 Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (NO FIRE)
- 92 Emergency Medical Services / Rescue (Injuries, Medical, or Fatality)
- 3 Hazardous Conditions Incidents (NO FIRE; Leaks, Spills, Electrical Hazards; All Other Hazardous Conditions without injuries)
- 1 Service Calls (Water Leak; Assist Other Agencies with Non-Emergency Calls)
- 35 Good Intent Calls (Smoke / Odor check; Investigation of Unknown Problem)
- 6 False Alarms or False Calls
- 0 Severe Weather & Natural Disaster
- 0 Special Incident Type (Citizen Complaint; Other)

**Additional Fire Department Activities**

- Completed routine Dept. maintenance and duties.
- Began Fire Hydrant Servicing.
- Participated in several CFD Shift meetings on Covid-19 response protocols and with local agencies (by video conference) on local Covid -19 issues.

**Training Division**

CFD completed 433 Total Man Hours of training during the month.

**Training consisted of:**

Community Risk Reduction  
Scene Management and Accountability of Personnel  
Firefighter Safety  
Aerial Operations

**Fire Inspections - Public Safety Education -Code Enforcement Division**

45 Total Reported Activities / Inspections completed during the month.

**Inspections / Enforcement**

3 Annual Inspection  
0 New Business Inspections  
14 Requested Inspections  
3 Follow Up, Re-Inspections  
0 Burn Site Inspections  
1 Plan Reviews  
0 Pre-Construction Meetings  
0 Sprinkler Permits Issued  
0 Fuel Tank Permit (Install, Removal or Service)  
24 Consultations  
0 Illegal Burning Citations

**Additional Inspection - Public Safety & Codes Division Activities**

- Duvall participated in the City Safety meeting and inspection.
- Fox is verifying information on buildings with sprinkler systems for fire protection inside the City of Calhoun.

4) **Safety Committee**

- The safety committee met on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and the topic of discussion was Seatbelt Safety.
- A safety inspection was completed on March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Street Department.
  - Vehicle accidents: 1
  - Workers compensation: 1

C. Councilman Denmon submitted March reports as follows:

1) **Public Works**

**Street Department**

1. Completed 21 shop and 22 street dept. work orders.
2. Installed 4 new street signs.
3. Continued the annual leaf cleanup around town.
4. Installed 60 feet of 18 inch storm drain on Wildwood Circle.

**Cemetery Department**

1. Performed routine maintenance on Fain and Chandler cemetery.

2. Supervised the opening and closing of 8 grave sites.
3. Sold 8 new grave space.

**Parks Department**

1. The grounds crew picked up litter, mowed, trimmed bushes, hauled garbage to the dump, and maintained records at records room.
2. The maintenance crew maintained designated buildings downtown.
3. Repaired a holes in the wall and painted at the depot.

**Animal Control**

- Housed 16 dogs and 5 cat
- Number of dogs adopted: 1
- Number of cats adopted: 0
- Number of dogs rescued: 6
- Number of cats rescued: 1
- Number of dogs reclaimed by owner: 6
- Number of cats reclaimed by owner: 0
- Number of dogs euthanized: 0
- Number of cats euthanized: 1
- Number of warnings given: 40
- Number of bite cases: 0
- Citations issues: 0

2) **Recreation Department**

**1. YOUTH SPORTS:**

**Baseball and Softball** – The 2020 Baseball and Softball season were cancelled on April 3 due to the Covid 19. All practices were stopped on March 14.

**Fourth Annual Youth Classic** – The Youth Classic was cancelled due to the Covid 19. The tournament was scheduled for March 27 – April 2 with teams from both Calhoun Recreation Dept. and Gordon Co. Recreation Dept. participating

**Youth Soccer** – The 2020 spring soccer season was cancelled on April 3 due to the Covid 19. All practices were stopped on March 14.

**2. PROGRAMS:**

**STARS** – The Saint Patrick’s Day event was cancelled due to Covid 19

**SENIORS** – ChairOne Fitness met March 3, 6, 11 and 13. There were 5 regular participants. Classes were cancelled the weeks of March 16, March 23 and March 30 due to Covid 19.

**TENNIS** – Tennis League Play – was suspended on March 14

CHS and CMS practices and matches were suspended March 13

**SUMMER CAMPS** – Dates and events for our summer camps are being completed. Those will be published when we start our programming back up.

**ADULT SOFTBALL** – Registration ended April 31. We have pushed the spring league back to tentatively start in June.

**3. PARKS/FACILITIES:**

The following tasks were completed throughout the month:

- 1 –trash and tree limbs daily – 4 employees

- 2 – drag all fields weekly – 2 employees
- 3- repair fence and gates – 4 employees
- 4 – repaint soccer field for high school -5 employees
- 5 – repaint soccer fields for Rec. soccer – 4 employees
- 6 – vacuumed water off ball fields – 4 employees
- 7 – weed eat all parks – 4 employees
- 8 – drag and box scrape all fields – 4 employees
- 9 – cleaned and organized barn on rainy days – 4 employees
- 10 – mowed all parks weekly – 4 employees
- 11 – pool maintenance – 1 employee
- 12- replaced cross ties at playgrounds from flooding – 4 employees
- 13 – mulched trees around ball fields – 1 employee
- 14 – edged infields – 4 employees
- 15 – mow, weed and mulch dog park – Wednesdays – 4 employees
- 16 – placed picnic tables throughout park – 4 employees
- 17 – cleaned up from flooding – 5 employees

**Facility Rentals:**

Billy Bearden Recreation Center:

- Meeting Room – 2 events      Community Room – 1 events      Gym – 2 events
- Black and Yellow Playground Pavilion – 2 events
- 8 rentals were cancelled between March 14 and March 31 due to Covid 19

**4. WEBSITE USAGE:**

CalhounRec.com	Facebook
Page Views – 1,532	Reach – 6,710
Users – 593	Post Engagements – 1,954
Sessions – 772	Posts - 23
Posts – 24	Page Views – 495
	Page Likes - 30

**5. COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT:**

- CVB Tourism Committee Meeting – March 12 – 1 staff member
- GRPA District Business and Athletic Meeting – March 25 – cancelled
- United Way Agency Meeting – March 26 – teleconference – 1 staff member

**3) Downtown Development Authority**

The HPC held their regularly scheduled meeting. They have finished installing the new historic signs. The DDA’s next scheduled event, BBQ, Boogie & Blues on April 24th and 25th has been cancelled. The DDA board is encouraging the community to shop local by curbside pickup or online at this time.

D. Mayor Pro Tem Crowley submitted March reports as follows:

**1) Electric Department**

- Construction continues on the new Gordon County Health Department at 310 North River Street, Calhoun High School Health Center, new 4,000 amp service for 320 South Industrial Blvd., plus new residential construction in Madison Garden on Beamer road and Willow Brook phase 2 on Dews Pond Road.
- Electrical Engineering has begun on the new 3,000 amp service for DHM Adhesive on River Street.

**WORK ORDERS IN PROCESS OR COMPLETED FOR MARCH:**

• NEWLY CREATED	66
• COMPLETED AND CLOSED	62
• CONSISTING OF:	
• CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION	21
• STREET AND SECURITY LIGHTING-	7
• DISTRIBUTION MAINTENANCE	12
• OUTAGES / TROUBLE CALLS	1
• WORK FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS	22
• NEW METER SETS	4
• METER MAINTENANCE/REPLACEMENT	9
• Electric Locate Tickets Processed-	212
•	
•	

**The City of Calhoun’s Electrical load for March 2020 is estimated to be about 28 million kilowatt hours (kWh). This is about one million less than March of 2019. Actual numbers will be released by April 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**The City of Calhoun Receives National Recognition:**

The American Public Power Association (APPA), which represents more than 2,000 not for profit, community owned electric utilities, recognized the City of Calhoun with the 2019 Award for Exceptional Electric Reliability. The City of Calhoun is the only Public Power Utility in Georgia to be recognized as one of the most reliable electric systems in the country. APPA compares Public Power utilities with the data every utility in the country is required to submit to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) to determine the Exceptional Electric Reliability Award. The City of Calhoun created the Electrical Department in 1907 and has a strong tradition of providing exceptional service to our neighbors and community; from the beginning our goal was to do a little

extra to keep the lights on and makes the community a little brighter. The City's Electrical line workers, tree trimmers, technicians, inspectors and engineers are committed to providing the nationally recognized service and reliability our community expects. The current trials and tribulations our community and the world is experiencing is testing everyone's patience's and endurance. The Cities commitment to minimal disruptions, as evident in this award, hopefully will provide a sense of normalcy that our community needs.

The award is judged by outage time and is measured using the System Average Interruption Duration (SAIDI); which is defined as the average interruption duration, in minutes, for all customers served.

## 2) Telecommunications

- Completed fiber construction and provisioning on two new internet circuits.
- Completed phone system replacement at Calhoun/Gordon County Library.
- Continue to work on new switch configurations and installation procedures.
- Installed new data cabinet at the Depot.
- Increased Tennis Center network speed by replacing transceiver with switch.
- Finished building new Police Department file server and completed transition for users.
- Built new server for Finance to support new forms printing and future applications.
- Upgraded firmware on city firewalls.
- Added backup internet service circuit to increase redundancy.
- Initiated a new email phishing campaign resulting in 17% failure out of 139 participants. Plenty of room for improvement.
- Filed annual revenue report with the Federal Government.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, telecom, as are many other departments, is adjusting to working alternating shifts with split personnel. We setup several users to work from home.
- Opened 6 and closed 9 work orders.

## **Geographic Information Systems**

- Demonstrated new Small Cell Attachment Right of Way application program to City staff. With a couple of minor changes the program was put into production for carriers to use.
- GIS personnel are mainly working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Participated with Engineering Department in water modeling
- Updated the following GIS layers
- Water system
- Metering
- Special Needs Registry for Police Department
- Fire pre-plans for industrial and commercial buildings

- Physical addressing for building and billing information
- Fiber network changes
- Zoning
- Updated City and GIS web sites
- City employee GIS login statistics
- Total logins – 1114
- Top three layers accessed
- Water – 492
- Fire Department - 193
- Metering – 127

3) **Building Inspections**

- Issued 42 permits for an estimated cost of \$4,112,326, collected \$27,471 in permit fees. This included 2 new residential, 1 residential remodel, 1 new commercial, 1 commercial remodel, 1 industrial remodel, 4 residential plumbing, 6 residential electrical, 1 commercial plumbing, 9 residential HVAC, 1 commercial HVAC, 4 commercial electrical, 1 industrial plumbing and 1 industrial HVAC. 126 total inspections.

7. **Public Hearing and Comments**

None.

8. **New Business**

None.

9. **Other Written Items Not on the Agenda**

10. **Work Reports**

A. Paul Worley, City Administrator gave a quick overview of where we are on the FY21 budget as follows:

- We will have detailed summaries, and expanded line item budgets ready before the April 27<sup>th</sup> budget work session. We may want to consider limiting a lengthy budget work session by utilizing email and phone calls as much as possible. I will be working on a detailed summary with commentary that I could just as easily share with you on a word document versus discussing at length in person. Just something to think about. Also May 11 public hearing. State law only requires one public hearing.
- We have put together a very conservative draft budget on both revenues and expenses for FY21. Due to the unprecedented times of a global pandemic, we will more than likely be adjusting the budget as more data comes in. For example, our first attempt at the budget, prior to mid-March when everything changed, we had a significant surplus, now after large adjustment down in revenue we are closer to \$100,000 positive.
- A big issue every year is health insurance. We originally had a 12.5% health insurance increase built into the budget (current market trend line) and now has

been reduced to 9.5%. (savings of \$98,000 total) This is good news considering our loss ratio was worse than last year.

- The health insurance increase alone accounting for more than the overall general fund increase. We currently have a 0.7% increase or approximately \$100,000 total. The health insurance alone is in the ballpark of \$180,000 increase in general fund expenses. Take this and other built in overhead, such as utility payment increases, and it is obvious that our Department Heads have actually reduced overall spending in areas they can control and limit costs. Couple this with a growing community with a growing demand on public services, and we should all be proud of the position we are now in.
- Only one new employee. (Police patrol) Not filling the Assistant City Administrator position at this time. So net effect is no new employees. No COLA budgeted at this time.
- Mayor and Council contingency: \$250,000. An \$80,000 contingency in Fire.
- More good news is that we are taking care of some immediate capital needs in this year's budget to help control expenses in next year's budget. That is the list I shared with you at our last work session. We have purchased two new trucks for community development, a new Pierce Fire engine that should be ready for service by the end of May/first of June, and a F-250 for the Fire battalion chiefs and a few other items.

#### Revenues

- I believe our biggest challenge in this year's budget will be accurately predicting revenues. Just like the private sector, many have thrown out previous projections completely. We have made our biggest adjustments or reductions to LOST, Hotel/Motel tax, utility transfers, TAVT, energy excise tax, and liquor pouring tax. I believe the sales tax and hotel/motel tax will be some of the hardest hit areas for the City.
- Fortunately, the City is well diversified in its revenue stream and we don't overly rely on any one area for revenues. This diversification should help us weather the storm better than others.
- We are currently budgeting property taxes based on the 2019 collections. We budgeted \$1.8 million last year and have \$2,080,000 budgeted for this year. This is a 15.6% increase. This assumption is based on our current millage rate of 2.6 and our current tax digest of \$859 million.
- With LOST, we have been trending toward \$3,250,000 prior to the virus shutdown. We first reduced that number back to this year's budgeted number of \$2,900,000. Since then, we have reduced it further to \$2,750,000. Therefore, a \$500,000 reduction or around 15% which is a target reduction that some other cities are looking at. We will know more when more sales tax data becomes available.
- We may want to consider making some adjustments to our Hotel/Motel distributions to equally distribute the revenue reduction. We would like to budget for a 25% reduction overall. With that, we may need to consider reducing the monthly payment to the Development authority by 10-20%. Also, the DDA currently has around \$112,000 in its H/M account. We currently send a full 0.5% to DDA of unrestricted funds. We may want to consider having that

0.5% deposited into the general fund, and then decide on a monthly allotment that would be needed to cover their annual needs

- B. Larry Vickery, Utilities Administrator stated that Calhoun Utilities was ready for however Council members want to approach budget hearings and meetings. He stated that the current budget will need to be adjusted for April and May due to the extraordinary circumstances the City is facing with COVID-19. Billing cycles are showing significant reductions in electric usage for April 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> compared to March 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. Sales are down 60%. He stated a lot of the cause for the decline was industrial accounts, primarily due to three plants not operating. He also gave council members a screen shot from MEAG's website showing the real time hourly load of 41.122. The website was showing electricity selling for 2.5 cents on the open market, and has now been below 1.5 cents for a number of days. He noted that commercial usage was also down 17%. He stated the Electric Department is currently offering special rates to get businesses to full capacity.

All departments continue to run two shifts allowing for a relief shift should one or the other get sick. Calhoun Utilities continues to participate in APPA conference calls. The water department continues maintenance daily.

Mayor Palmer thanked Mr. Worley and Mr. Vickery for the updates.

- C. George Govignon, City Attorney


11. Motion to move to Executive Session, if needed

12. Motion to return to General Session

13. Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business Mayor Pro Tem Crowley made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Palazzolo gave a second with all voting aye. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Approved:

  
James F. Palmer, Mayor

Submitted:

  
Sharon Nelson, City Clerk

