



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

City Council Work Session Minutes

June 15, 2026, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

On Monday, June 15, 2026, at 4:12 p.m. in the Gary McCullough Council Chambers at Dahlonega City Hall, the Dahlonega City Council held a Work Session with the following persons present: Johnny Ariemma - Member, Dan Brown - Member, Tony Owens - Member, Ryan Reagin - Member, Ross Shirley - Member / Mayor Pro Tem, Sam Norton - Mayor, Allison Martin - City Manager, Doug Parks - City Attorney, and Rhonda Hansard - City Clerk.

I. *CALL TO ORDER*

II. *APPROVAL OF AGENDA*

III. *BOARDS AND COMMITTEES*

- (1.) *Cemetery Committee - May 2026*
Chris Worick, Cemetery Committee Chairman
- (2.) *Downtown Dahlonega Main Street Program - May 2026*
Ariel Alexander, Dahlonega Main Street Program Director

IV. *DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT:*
<https://dahlonega.gov/category/departments-reports/>

- (1.) *Administration - May 2026*
Allison Martin, City Manager
- (2.) *Community Development - May 2026*
Allison Martin, City Manager
- (3.) *Police - May 2026*
George Albert, Chief of Police
- (4.) *Public Works - May 2026*
Mark Buchanan, City Engineer
- (5.) *Water and Wastewater Treatment - May 2026*
John Jarrard, Water and Wastewater Treatment Director

V. *APPOINTMENTS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS*

- (1.) *Appointment of Molly Callender to the Dahlonega Housing Authority*
Sam Norton, Mayor
- (2.) *Appointment of Joyce Westmoreland to the Dahlonega Housing Authority*

Sam Norton, Mayor

VI. PRESENTATIONS

- (1.) *City Manager's Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget*
Allison Martin, City Manager
- (2.) *Presentation of Proclamation to City by Bentley Brandon*
Bentley Brandon

VII. AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

- (1.) *Municipal Funding Acquisition Agreement with GFAAC, LLC*
Allison Martin, City Manager
- (2.) *Municipal Court Judge Service Agreement Renewal*
Doug Parks, City Attorney

VIII. OTHER ITEMS

- (1.) *Cemetery Committee Bylaws Amendment*
Chris Worick, Cemetery Committee Chairman
- (2.) *Proposal for Downtown Dahlonega Shuttle Program and Employee Parking*
Ariel Alexander, Dahlonega Main Street Program Director
- (3.) *Creation of a Festival Committee*
Tony Owens, Councilmember
- (4.) *Friendly Faces Ambassador Program*
Ariel Alexander, Dahlonega Main Street Program Director
- (5.) *TSW Zoning Ordinance Update - June 2026*
Allison Martin, City Manager

IX. STAFF / COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS - PLEASE LIMIT TO
THREE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

Clerk Comments

City Manager Comments

City Attorney Comments

City Council Comments

Mayor Comments

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton called the Work Session to order with the following Councilmembers present: Ariemma, Brown, Owens, Reagin, and Shirley; Councilman Bagley was absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There was a motion by Councilman Brown and a second by Councilman Shirley to approve the Agenda as presented.

Motion carried with five members in favor (Ariemma, Brown, Owens, Reagin, and Shirley) and one member absent (Bagley).

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

(1.) Cemetery Committee - May 2026

Chris Worick, Cemetery Committee Chairman, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Cemetery Committee Report. Chairman Worick announced that the Committee seeks to amend its Bylaws by inserting a clause that allows for the removal of "chronically absent" members.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring about the cleaning of headstones and whether there are any citizens currently interested in serving on the Committee.

Chairman Worick responded to the Council and stated that if the cleaning product/equipment is something that you would use on your car, then it is typically safe to use on a headstone and should not cause damage; he confirmed that there are citizens that currently have a desire to serve on the Committee.

No Council action was taken.

(2.) Downtown Dahlonga Main Street Program - May 2026

Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Downtown Dahlonga Main Street Program Report.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring where food trucks will be placed during Old Fashioned Christmas; if the City (budget) is ready for the fireworks scheduled to occur on July 4; and, the cost of sponsorship of the First Friday Concert events.

Ms. Alexander responded to the Council with the following: the Old Fashioned Christmas Committee has requested that food trucks be placed on Worick Street; the City (budget) is ready for the fireworks but Main Street is continuing to look for sponsorships; and, there are different levels/tiers of sponsorship of the First Friday Concert events with the first level starting at \$400.00.

No Council action was taken.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

(1.) Administration - May 2026

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Administration Department Report. Manager Martin announced that the EPA grant writers have approved the Koyo Lift Station; a job offer has been extended to a Director of Utilities candidate; and, letters will soon be issued to local businesses that were found out of compliance from the recent Alcohol Excise Tax / Accommodations Tax Compliance Audit.

No Council action was taken.

(2.) Community Development - May 2026

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Community Development Department Report.

The Council inquired about the permits in fine print included in the Report.

Manager Martin responded that while the permits may not be active, they are still open in the City's operating system.

No Council action was taken.

(3.) Police - May 2026

Chief George Albert addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Police Department Report.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring about flock cameras within the City and what initiates a "Disrepair Structure Notice" as noted in the Report.

Chief Albert responded that other jurisdictions, including school systems, have gone to the flock camera system and that the technology is out there to share.

Allison Martin, City Manager, responded that the City has to be careful that it does not constitute a taking of property since the City's downtown falls under Historic Preservation. She confirmed that two properties have been issued a "Disrepair Structure Notice" with one property having a porch that was subject to fire; she also confirmed that Code Compliance has tried to work with the property owners.

No Council action was taken.

(4.) Public Works - May 2026

Mark Buchanan, City Engineer, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Public Works Department Report.

No Council action was taken.

(5.) Water and Wastewater Treatment - May 2026

John Jarrard, Water and Wastewater Treatment Director, addressed the Council and provided the May 2026 Water and Wastewater Department Report.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring about the water tank at UNG; the best place for citizens to view the City's water quality; and, if the City is currently monitoring PFAS.

Mr. Jarrard responded that the tank at UNG is installed just for firefighting that it is not for potable use, and that the City's Water Quality Report is available online or printed versions are located in City Hall. Mr. Jarrard invited anyone that is interested to come and view the City's water treatment plant.

Allison Martin, City Manager, confirmed that the City is participating in PFAS monitoring by testing raw and source water; wastewater will be tested in the future.

No Council action was taken.

APPOINTMENTS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Norton addressed the Council and confirmed that the Dahlonaga Housing Authority currently has two vacancies and that both Ms. Callender and Ms. Westmoreland have interest in serving on the Authority and meet the criteria.

- (1.) Appointment of Molly Callender to the Dahlonaga Housing Authority**
- (2.) Appointment of Joyce Westmoreland to the Dahlonaga Housing Authority**

No Council action was taken.

PRESENTATIONS

- (1.) City Manager's Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. Manager Martin announced that the following positions are being requested for 2027: two (2) full-time Police Officers, two (2) Police Officer staff member rank changes, one (1) full-time Taxation Compliance Officer, one (1) GIS Analyst, and one (1) Finance Director.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring why two additional Police Officers are needed and whether a Planning Director is included in the proposed budget. The belief that the Taxation Compliance Officer can catch mistakes that could possibly pay for their own salary was expressed.

Manager Martin responded that she would let Chief Albert speak to the additions and rank changes of Police Officers and that a Planning Director position is included in the 2026 budget.

No Council action was taken.

(2.) Presentation of Proclamation to City by Bentley Brandon

Bentley Brandon addressed the Council and provided a presentation.

No Council action was taken.

AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

(1.) Municipal Funding Acquisition Agreement with GFAAC, LLC

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council regarding the Municipal Funding Acquisition Agreement with GFAAC, LLC.

Without exception, the Council agreed to place this Item under the next Regular Meeting's Agenda.

No Council action was taken.

[Clerk's Note: the next Regular Meeting will occur on July 6, 2026.]

(2.) Municipal Court Judge Service Agreement Renewal

Doug Parks, City Attorney, addressed the Council regarding the Municipal Court Judge Service Agreement Renewal.

Without exception, the Council agreed to place this Item under the next Regular Meeting's Agenda.

No Council action was taken.

[Clerk's Note: the next Regular Meeting will occur on July 6, 2026.]

OTHER ITEMS

(1.) Cemetery Committee Bylaws Amendment

Mark Buchanan, City Engineer, addressed the Council and reiterated the proposed changes to the Cemetery Committee Bylaws as previously referenced by Chairman Chris Worick during the Cemetery Committee Report.

Without exception, the Council agreed to place this Item under the next Regular Meeting's Agenda.

No Council action was taken.

[Clerk's Note: the next Regular Meeting will occur on July 6, 2026.]

(2.) Proposal for Downtown Dahlonga Shuttle Program and Employee Parking

Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director, addressed the Council regarding a proposed shuttle program and employee parking.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring whether 147 Park Street will be a permitted lot for employees only and whether a private company will be managing/operating the shuttle service.

Ms. Alexander and Allison Martin, City Manager, responded to the Council stating that an Ordinance or a City Policy could be enacted that would allow the City to select the shuttle operator using a method similar to how the horse carriage vendor(s) is selected. Manager Martin also confirmed that a conversation was held with Lumpkin County and that they agreed to allow the City to use its parking lots during evenings and weekends.

Mayor Norton requested that Ms. Alexander further research the shuttle program and draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) for presentation during a future meeting.

No Council action was taken.

(3.) Creation of a Festival Committee

Mayor Norton and Councilmember Owens addressed the Council regarding the creation of a Festival Committee; a proposed Scope of Work (SOW) was displayed.

Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director, was recognized and stated that she sees the formation of such Committee as a good thing and that her recommendation was to overlap the Committee with the Main Street Advisory Board.

Mayor Norton requested that Ms. Alexander keep working towards this Committee and mentioned that City Manager, Allison Martin, was great at drafting Bylaws; he noted that the final draft [of Bylaws] will need to be reviewed by the City Attorney.

No Council action was taken.

(4.) Friendly Faces Ambassador Program

Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director, addressed the Council and confirmed that she envisioned the proposed Friendly Faces Ambassador Program to be a type of tourism ambassador program.

The Council held a discussion to include inquiring what type of education for participants will be required; requesting clarification of dress code required for participants; and, whether the program will fall under Main Street / Ms. Alexander's management.

Ms. Alexander and Allison Martin, City Manager, responded that packets which include the City's brand will be distributed to participants and that participants will be asked to sign an Agreement with the City. Manager Martin confirmed that the dress code has already been addressed and better defined.

Sam McDuffie, Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Visitors Bureau Executive Director, was recognized and informed the Council that the County Visitors Bureau (CVB) is exploring implementing something similar to this program.

No Council action was taken.

(5.) TSW Zoning Ordinance Update - June 2026

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council and provided an update regarding the proposed Zoning Ordinance. She confirmed that the attorneys are currently working on a few remaining items and that she was to provide additional information regarding the current Zoning Map to City Attorney Parks.

Manager Martin advised that once the tasks above are complete, there will be one additional read of the draft and then it will be available for presentation to the Planning Commission and then to the City Council.

Doug Parks, City Attorney, advised that consideration for adoption of the Ordinance will possibly occur in October 2026.

No Council action was taken.

STAFF / COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Rhonda Hansard, City Clerk, announced the upcoming events for the Council: City Manager's Budget Workshops on June 23 and 24; GMA 2026 Annual Convention in Savannah from June 25 until June 30; City Hall closure in observance of Independence Day on July 3; and, City Council Regular Meeting on July 6.

Allison Martin, City Manager, announced that the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will hold a meeting on June 22, and a Comprehensive Plan Input Session will occur at the library on June 30. She also announced that City staff is preparing for the festivities set to occur on July 4 and that staff will be working on July 3 and 4 to ensure all activities are successful.

Doug Parks, City Attorney, announced that there are two Ordinances forthcoming: the Blight Ordinance and Bus Parking Ordinance.

Councilman Ariemma requested a copy of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget prior to the City Manager's Budget Workshops.

Mayor Norton announced that he had lunch with the new Chairman of the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners and that he felt good about working with him. He also announced that he may have to leave the GMA 2026 Annual Convention early due to the arrival of a new grandchild.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion by Councilman Owens and a second by Councilman Shirley to adjourn the Work Session.

Motion carried with five members in favor (Ariemma, Brown, Owens, Reagin, and Shirley) and one member absent (Bagley), and the Work Session was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Approved this 6th day of July, 2026.



Sam Norton, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rhonda P. Hansard, City Clerk