



**Regular Meeting of the Mayor and City Council
City of Ball Ground, Georgia
Ball Ground City Hall ~ 7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES
August 10, 2023**

Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Mayor Rick Roberts

Recognize Veteran of the Month – Nolan Haynes

Council Member Dennis Nelson recognized Specialist 4 John Nolan Haynes as Veteran of the Month. Sadly, Mr. Haynes passed in May. His wife Sandra accepted the honor on his behalf posthumously. Mr. Haynes was inducted into the US Army in 1959. He also served on the Ball Ground City Council for four years.

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance (Led by Sandra Haynes wife of Nolan Haynes)

Item 3: Approve Agenda

Council Member Homiller put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Benefield, to approve the agenda.

Motion Unanimously Approved.

Item 4: Appearances/Public Comments

Item 5: Announcements/Informational Items

Item 6: Consider Approval of Minutes: July 13, 2023

Council Member Rogers put forward a motion, Second by Council Member Barnes, to approve the minutes in writing as submitted by the City Clerk.

Motion Unanimously Approved.

Item 7: Old Business - None

Item 8: New Business

a) Consider First Reading of Hotel Motel Tax Ordinance

Mayor Roberts introduced to the governing body an ordinance to establish a hotel motel tax up to eight percent (8%) subject to the General Assembly, and up to five percent (5%) without the General Assembly.

The intent of the ordinance is to levy an excise tax on rooms, lodgings, and accommodations to provide additional funding for the promotion of tourism, and infrastructure to support tourism such as parking, pedestrian connections, trails and other improvements or investments allowed by law.

The purpose of this ordinance is to enact an excise tax upon the furnishing of value to the public of any room or rooms, lodgings or accommodations facilitated or furnished by an innkeeper.

All revenue will be collected under this tax shall be allocated in accordance with the requirements in O.C.G.A 48-13-51(a)(3) and shall become effective January 1, 2024.

Council Member Nelson put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Rogers, to approve the first reading of this ordinance as proposed.

Motion Unanimously Approved.

- b) Consider Adoption of Resolution Whereas The Mayor and City Council Pledges to Practice and Promote Civility in the City of Ball Ground.

A Resolution pledging to practice Civility and abide by the “Civility Pledge” to promote decorum and communication between Council/staff and the community was presented for consideration.

Council Member Homiller put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Barnes, to approve the resolution as presented.

Motion Unanimously Approved.

Mayor Roberts stated that Ball Ground is the second city in the county to adopt the resolution. He stated that he is proud of the way our elected officials have in the past and continue to conduct themselves during meetings.

- c) Consider Temporary Lift of Burn Ban

City Manager Wilmarth put forth for council consideration to temporarily lift the city ordinance that prohibits outdoor burning. He stated that residents are faced with how to dispose of yard debris from recent storms. Only city residents that have one acre or more and lives east of Northridge Road would be allowed to burn debris left behind from the storms. Burning must take place between the hours of 8:00AM – 6:00 PM and must be attended at all times. The ban would expire on September 14.

Council Member Barnes put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Benefield to temporarily lift the city burn ban for disposal of recent storm debris for residents that have one acre or more and lives east of Northridge Road. Burning must take place between the hours of 8:00AM – 6:00 PM and must be attended at all times. The ban would expire on September 14.

Motion Unanimously Approved.

Item 9: Staff Reports

Police Chief Bryon Reeves provided the mayor and council with a written and oral report of the department’s activity. He stated the department is currently seeking applications for three officers. He also hopes to hire a full-time officer soon.

Chief Reeves stated the department is currently working to achieve State certification. This is a lengthy process but hope to have it completed within a year.

City Manager Eric Wilmarth provided the mayor and council with an unaudited report of account balances, and statement of revenue and expenditures for the month ended July 31, 2023. The report showed cash on deposit totaling \$2,613,827.56.

City Manager Wilmarth provided updates to the mayor and council on projects around the city.

- The annual financial audit for the period ended June 30, 2023 is scheduled to begin in September.
- Employee handbook is currently being updated.
- Extension of Valley St. sidewalk to extend over railroad tract to Gilmer Ferry Rd. is underway.
- The Pocket Park project located downtown has experienced some delays but should be completed soon.
- The playground in Calvin Farmer Park will soon undergo renovation.
- It is anticipated that the extension of Roberts Lake Trail will be completed in late September.

Item 10: Mayor Roberts

Mayors stated that for the last couple of months he has been on site of several leaks while crews are working to repair the lines. The mayor commented that Eric was always on site with the crews as they worked to restore water. He commended Eric for always being on site with the water department crew and for their work to always restore water as fast as possible.

Mayor Roberts announced that City Manager Eric Wilmarth has been elected as Chairperson of the Cherokee County Water and Sewage Authority Board of Directors. He stated that is a huge to the CCWSA because of the knowledge and experience Eric has when dealing with water and sewage.

Eric thanked Mayor Roberts for his comments and stated that he is part of a phenomenal team beginning with the administrative staff to public works to water department and he could not be more blessed to be a part of it. The institutional knowledge that each has is irreplaceable.

Item 11: Council Comments

Council Member Nelson extended his appreciation to Eric and his staff on how quickly the debris left behind from the recent storms was cleaned up.

Council Member Barnes, Chair of the Finance Committee recognized Donna and her team on the preparation for the upcoming financial audit and for her day-to-day detailed and informative accounting.

Item 12: Public Comments - None

Item 14: Executive Session (If Needed)

Item 15: Adjourn

Council Member Benefield put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM.

The minutes of this August 10, 2023 City Council Meeting approved this 14th Day of September 2023

**Respectfully submitted by:
Karen L. Jordan
City Clerk**