



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

**July 13, 2023**

**Public Hearing**

**A public hearing was held at 11:00 AM regarding the proposed 2023 property tax millage rate. Mayor Roberts and Council Members Scott Barnes and Vicki Benefield were in attendance. Staff Present was Eric Wilmarth, Chris Luly, Bryon Reeves, and City Clerk Karen Jordan. No others in attendance.**

**No comments received.**

**The public hearing adjourned at 11:15 AM.**

**A third public was held at 7:00 PM regarding the proposed 2023 property tax millage rate. Mayor Roberts and Council Members, Scott Barnes, Vicki Benefield, Dennis Nelson, and Kristine Rogers were in attendance. Council Member Annette Homiller was absent. Staff Present was Eric Wilmarth, Chris Luly, Donna England, Bryon Reeves, Darrell Caudill, and City Clerk Karen Jordan**

**City Resident Bill Manning challenged Mayor Roberts and Council Members to consider other ways to generate revenue rather than raising taxes.**

**No other comments .**

**The public hearing adjourned at 7:15 PM.**

**Cit of Ball Ground  
City Council Meeting  
July 13, 2023  
Minutes**

**Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Mayor Rick Roberts**

**Council Members Present: Scott Barnes, Vicki Benefield, Dennis Nelson, and Kristine Rogers. Annette Homiller was absent.**

**Staff Present was Eric Wilmarth, Chris Luly, Bryon Reeves, and City Clerk Karen Jordan.**

**Recognized Veteran of the Month – Council Member Nelson introduced Mr. George Michael (Mike) Malone, Sergeant, US Air Force Retired as Veteran of the Month. While in the service Mike spent four years in Vietnam. Upon returning home Mike served as Assistant Chief in the Ball Ground Volunteer Fire Department as well as two years as a City of Ball Ground Council Member. Mike retired in 2008 after 26 plus years with the Cherokee County Sheriff's Department as Chief Deputy. During that time, he also worked with the Cherokee County District Attorney's Office and Fire Services**

**Mr. Malone thanked Mayor and Council for bestowing this honor upon him and wanted to thank City Manager Eric Wilmarth for years of service in the United States Army.**

**Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance led by Mike Malone, Veteran of the month.**

**Item 3: Approve Agenda**

**Council Member Benefield put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Rogers, to approve the meeting agenda as submitted.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 4: Appearances/Public Comments**

**Mollie Poole was unable to attend the meeting.**

**Robin Ray, resident of 821 Northridge Rd stated that she is an employee of Chevron Food Mart located at 155 Howell Bridge Road. Ms. Ray asked mayor and council to support the location of 155 Howell Bridge Road for a liquor store.**

**Vrushang Patel addressed the mayor and council on a proposed project and application for package sales of beer, wine, and liquor at 8051 Ball Ground Highway that he submitted. Mr. Patel asked the mayor and council to consider approval of his application for package sales of beer, wine, and liquor. He further stated the development he is proposing would consist of a package store along with a restaurant and dry cleaner.**

**Munir Meghjani, co-owner of Chevron Food Mart located at 155 Howell Bridge Road asked for mayor and council to reconsider their approval for the liquor store at 8051 Ball Ground Highway. Mr. Meghjani instead asked that permission be granted to his application for a liquor store at their establishment, 155 Howell Bridge Road.**

Zulpileani Piselni, Co-Owner of Chevron Food Mart located at 155 Howell Bridge Road urged mayor and council members to support the approval for the proposed liquor store at 155 Howell Bridge Road. Mr. Piselni kindly asked the mayor and council to reconsider their approval of the proposed liquor store at 8051 Ball Ground Highway and instead grant permission to their proposal.

**Item 5: Announcements/Informational Items**

**Sept 9 – Guardians of the Juke Box will perform in City Park**

**October 7 – Ball Ground Rocks Festival will be held in City Park**

**City Manager Wilmarth announced that the Roberts Lake Trail will receive the History Cherokee's 2023 Historic Preservation Award at the August 10, 2023 banquet.**

**Item 6: Consider Approval of Minutes: June 8, 2023**

**Council Member Benefield put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Nelson to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023 Council Meeting as submitted in writing by the City Clerk.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 7: Old Business**

- a) **Application for Retail Package Sales of Beer, Wine, and Liquor**  
**Applicant: Sopan Ballground, LLC/DBA Somras - Bhavinkumar Mahendrabhal Patel**  
**Location: 8051 Ball Ground Hwy., Suite B**

**Council Member Rogers put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Barnes to approve the application by Sopan Ballground for packages sales of beer, wine, and liquor at 8051 Ball Ground Hwy with the following condition: Phase One of the project consists of one building to be constructed and a certificate of occupancy issued for the building which is to house a restaurant, liquor store and dry cleaner.**

**Motion Approved 3-1.**

**Item 8: New Business**

- a) **Consider A Resolution to Adopt the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update**

**Chris Luly stated the 2023 Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and deemed it compliant with the procedures outlined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. The next step is for the council to adopt the plan.**

**Council Member Barnes put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Rogers to adopt a Resolution adopting the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

Mayor Roberts and Council Members commended Chris for his work on this project.

b) **Consider Adoption of 2023 Schedule of Fees**

**Additional fees to consider:**

- **Establish a \$1,000. fine/fee or customers making an unauthorized connection to the water or sewer system.**
- **Water Line Tapping Fee \$750.**
- **Swimming Pool Permit Increase to \$300.**
- **Community Building Rental Fee increase to \$350. for non-city resident**
- **Gymnasium Rate for non-sport events is \$250. for a 4-hour block for city residents. Non-resident rate \$350.**
- **Brewery, Wine Tasting Rooms, and Growler Annual Fee is \$500.**

**Council Member Nelson put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Benefield to adopt the 2023 Schedule of Fees as submitted.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

c) **Consider Submittal of a Pre-application for funding from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund.**

**Resolution 2023-05 states The City of Ball Ground agrees to submit a Pre-application for funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The City of Ball Ground further agrees that in the event of the City of Ball Ground's pre-application is recommended for funding by the Department of Natural Resources, the City of Ball Ground certifies and assures that it has the ability and intention to finance their 50 percent of the total project cost and will move forward with due diligence to prepare, or have prepared, appropriate documentation required for a for a LWCF application.**

**City Manager Wilmarth stated that the city is asking for a \$125,000.00 matching grant to fund the construction of a splashpad in Calvin Farmer Park.**

**Council Member Rogers put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Benefield to approve Resolution 2023-05 for the submittal of the Pre-application for funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

d) **Consider Request by Woody Snell to Remove Zoning Conditions Which Require a Center Turn Lane be installed at the Entrance of Malones Pond**

**Mr. Woody Snell asked the council to consider removing the zoning condition requiring the construction of a center turn lane at the entrance of Malones Pond on Old Dawsonville Road.**

**Council Member Benefield put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Barnes to grant approval of the request by Mr. Snell.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

e) **Consider Surplus of Property in Lantern Walk Subdivision.**

City Manager Wilmarth stated this property identified as lot 03N01 090 B on the city geographical information system is a non-buildable lot in the Lantern Walk Subdivision. It is recommended that should the council declare the property surplus the City retain full easement rights on the property and restrict the property to greenspace only.

Motion by Council Member Benefield, Seconded by Council Member Nelson to declare lot 03N01 090B in the Lantern Walk Subdivision as surplus property with the condition the City retain full easement rights to the property and restrict the property to greenspace only. The conditions are to be noted on the property deed.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

f) **Consider Adoption of Millage Rate for 2023 Property Tax**

City Manager Wilmarth stated that based on the information provided by the Cherokee County Tax Commissioner maintaining a millage rate of 3.938 will equate to a 11.27% increase this year. As discussed at the work session it was the consensus of the council to maintain the 2022 same millage rate of 3.938 despite the increase of property values. The City has dealt with the rising cost of vehicle fuel, insurance, utility cost and other necessities just as everyone else.

Council Member Barnes put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Rogers to levy a millage rate of 3.898 for the 2023 year.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

g) **Consider Adoption of Fire Tax Millage Rate for 2023**

City Manager Wilmarth stated that each year the Fire Tax is levied by the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, which we then adopt. This year the BOC has not yet set the millage rate but recommended adopting the millage rate as levied by the Board Of Commissioners at their July meeting.

Council Member Rogers put forth a motion Seconded by Council Member Barnes to adopt the Fire Tax Millage Rate as levied by the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners.

**Motion Unanimously Approved**

**Item 9: City Manager Comments**

City Manager Wilmarth provided Council Members with an unaudited report of account balances, and statement of revenue and expenditures for the month ended June 30, 2023. The report showed cash on deposit totaled \$2,607,325.55.

City Manager Wilmarth presented an update on various projects throughout the city.

Chief Reeves presented a written report of the Police Department's activities for the month ended June30, 2023.

**Item 10: Mayor Roberts Comments**

Mayor Roberts commented on the quality of training services provided by the Georgia Municipal Association and Carl Vinson Institute of Government. He along with Council Members Scott Barnes, Annette Homiller and Kristine Rogers recently attended the annual GMA Training Conference in Savannah. He encouraged council members to attend training sessions when possible.

**Item 11: Council Comments**

Council Member Nelson commended the public works department for the remarkable work they did during a recent incident.

**Item 12: Public Comments - None**

**Item 13: Executive Session (If Needed)**

**Item 14: Adjourn**

There being no further business for consideration Council Member Nelson put forward a motion, Seconded by Council Member Barnes to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Karen L. Jordan  
City Clerk